

University of Warwick institutional repository: <http://go.warwick.ac.uk/wrap>

**A Thesis Submitted for the Degree of PhD at the University of Warwick**

<http://go.warwick.ac.uk/wrap/35207>

This thesis is made available online and is protected by original copyright.

Please scroll down to view the document itself.

Please refer to the repository record for this item for information to help you to cite it. Our policy information is available from the repository home page.

**Perceptions of Catholicity in a plural society: an ethnographic  
case study of Catholic secondary schools in England**

**by**

**Ann Elizabeth Casson**

**A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

**Institute of Education  
University of Warwick**

**Date of submission: September 2010**

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| <b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b>  | <b>1</b>  |
| <b>DECLARATION</b>   | <b>1</b>  |
| <b>ABSTRACT</b>  | <b>2</b>  |
| <b>GLOSSARY</b>  | <b>3</b>  |
| <b>INTRODUCTION</b>  | <b>10</b> |
| RESEARCH CONTEXT   | 10        |
| <i>The value of educational research</i>   | 11        |
| <i>Reflection on the role of researcher</i>  | 11        |
| OVERVIEW OF THE THESIS   | 12        |
| <b>CHAPTER 1: SETTING THE SCENE: THE CATHOLIC SECONDARY SCHOOL IN TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY ENGLAND</b>   | <b>16</b> |
| 1.1 INTRODUCTION   | 16        |
| 1.2 FAITH SCHOOLS DEBATE   | 16        |
| 1.3 CATHOLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ENGLAND  | 19        |
| 1.4 THE CATHOLIC COMMUNITY IN ENGLAND  | 22        |
| 1.5 A CATHOLIC PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION   | 25        |
| 1.6 CATHOLIC SCHOOLS AND A PLURAL SOCIETY  | 29        |
| 1.7 RESEARCH IN CATHOLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS   | 32        |
| 1.8 QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE STUDIES   | 40        |
| 1.9 BRIEF OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH STUDIES   | 42        |
| 1.10 CONCLUSION  | 43        |
| <b>CHAPTER 2: A SOCIOLOGICAL UNDERSTANDING OF MAINSTREAM RELIGION IN TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY EUROPE</b> | <b>45</b> |
| 2.1 INTRODUCTION   | 45        |
| 2.2 THE SECULARISATION DEBATE  | 46        |
| 2.3 RELIGION AS A CHAIN OF MEMORY  | 47        |
| 2.4 CATHOLICISM: MAINTAINING THE MEMORY  | 53        |
| 2.5 BRICOLAGE AND CATHOLIC IDENTITY  | 56        |
| 2.6 RELIGION AS ‘EVERYDAY’ RELIGION  | 60        |
| 2.7 THE APPLICATION OF HERVIEU-LÉGER’S THEORY  | 61        |
| 2.8 CONCLUSION   | 63        |
| <b>CHAPTER 3: RELIGION AND SOCIAL CAPITAL THEORY</b>   | <b>65</b> |
| 3.1 INTRODUCTION   | 65        |
| 3.2 THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONCEPT OF SOCIAL CAPITAL   | 65        |
| 3.3 THE CONTRIBUTION OF BOURDIEU, COLEMAN AND PUTNAM   | 66        |
| 3.4 AN EVALUATION OF BONDING AND BRIDGING CAPITAL  | 72        |
| 3.5 SPIRITUAL AND RELIGIOUS CAPITAL  | 76        |
| 3.6 THE APPLICATION OF SOCIAL CAPITAL THEORY IN RECENT RESEARCH                                      | 80        |
| 3.7 CONCLUSION   | 83        |
| <b>CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY: ETHNOGRAPHY IN SCHOOL</b>   | <b>84</b> |
| 4.1 INTRODUCTION   | 84        |

|   |   |            |
|---|---|------------|
| 4.2   | ONTOLOGY, EPISTEMOLOGY AND SUBTLE REALISM   | 84         |
| 4.3   | ETHNOGRAPHIC RESEARCH   | 86         |
| 4.4   | THE VALUE OF THE ETHNOGRAPHIC CASE STUDY  | 89         |
| 4.5   | ETHNOGRAPHIC CASE STUDY RESEARCH  | 96         |
| 4.6   | REFLEXIVITY   | 99         |
| 4.7   | RESEARCHING YOUNG PEOPLE'S VIEWS  | 102        |
| 4.8   | CONCLUSION  | 104        |
| <b>CHAPTER 5: THE METHOD</b>  |   | <b>106</b> |
| 5.1   | INTRODUCTION  | 106        |
| 5.2   | ETHICAL GUIDELINES  | 106        |
| 5.3   | THE SELECTION OF THE CASE STUDY SCHOOLS   | 108        |
| 5.4   | THE METHODS: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW  | 109        |
| 5.5   | THE METHODS: OBSERVATIONS   | 118        |
| 5.6   | RECORDING AND TRANSCRIBING DATA   | 120        |
| 5.7   | METHODS OF ANALYSING THE ETHNOGRAPHIC DATA  | 122        |
| 5.8   | FRAMEWORK FOR REPORTING THE ETHNOGRAPHIC FINDINGS                                     | 124        |
| 5.9   | CONCLUSION  | 125        |
| <b>CHAPTER 6: PERCEPTIONS OF CATHOLICITY OF THE CATHOLIC SECONDARY SCHOOL</b> |   | <b>126</b> |
| 6.1   | INTRODUCTION  | 126        |
| 6.2   | COMMUNAL DIMENSION: THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT  | 128        |
| 6.3   | COMMUNAL DIMENSION: CATHOLIC LITURGIES IN SCHOOL                                      | 131        |
| 6.4   | EMOTIONAL DIMENSION: RETREATS AND MISSIONS  | 137        |
| 6.5   | EMOTIONAL DIMENSION: THE PILGRIMAGE TO LOURDES  | 140        |
| 6.6   | REFLECTIONS ON PARTICIPANTS' PERCEPTIONS OF PILGRIMAGE                                | 147        |
| 6.7   | CONCLUSION  | 148        |
| <b>CHAPTER 7: A CATHOLIC IDENTITY: THE STUDENT 'BRICOLEURS'?</b>              |   | <b>150</b> |
| 7.1   | INTRODUCTION  | 150        |
| 7.2   | RELIGIOUS IDENTITY FORMATION  | 150        |
| 7.3   | MARIA - THE 'HARDCORE' CATHOLIC   | 153        |
| 7.3.1   | <i>'Hardcore' Catholic and Church attendance</i>                                      | 155        |
| 7.4   | ALICE - THE 'BAPTISED' CATHOLIC   | 157        |
| 7.5   | ANNA - THE 'HALFWAY' CATHOLIC   | 159        |
| 7.6   | LOUISE - THE CATHOLIC 'PILGRIM'   | 161        |
| 7.7   | CATHERINE – THE 'GOLDEN RULE' CATHOLIC  | 162        |
| 7.8   | PETER – THE 'SCHOOL' CATHOLIC   | 163        |
| 7.8.1   | <i>Reflections on the role of the Catholic school in creating a Catholic identity</i> | 164        |
| 7.9   | JAMES – THE CATHOLIC ATHEIST?   | 165        |
| 7.10  | JENNY – THE FAMILY HERITAGE   | 166        |
| 7.11  | THE NON-CATHOLIC IN A CATHOLIC SCHOOL   | 168        |
| 7.12  | REFLECTIONS ON CONSTRUCTIONS OF CATHOLIC IDENTITY                                     | 169        |
| 7.13  | CONCLUSION  | 172        |
| <b>CHAPTER 8: 'CATHOLIC' VALUES AND THE TRANSMISSION OF CATHOLICITY</b>       |   | <b>174</b> |

|   |  |            |
|---|--|------------|
| 8.1   | INTRODUCTION   | 174        |
| 8.2   | THEORETICAL REFLECTIONS ON THE TRANSMISSION OF THE FAITH TRADITION       | 174        |
| 8.3   | ‘IT’S THE ATMOSPHERE’  | 176        |
| 8.4   | THE VALUES THAT ‘ANIMATE’ THE CATHOLIC ETHOS                             | 178        |
| 8.5   | CATHOLIC PRINCIPLES  | 185        |
| 8.6   | RELIGIOUS EDUCATION  | 187        |
| 8.7   | ‘CATHOLIC’ TEACHERS  | 191        |
| 8.8   | THE CATHOLIC SCHOOL: THE SOLE MEANS OF TRANSMISSION                      | 196        |
| 8.9   | CONCLUSION   | 198        |
| <b>CHAPTER 9: THE CATHOLIC SCHOOL: A ‘SENSE OF COMMUNITY’</b>                     |  | <b>200</b> |
| 9.1   | INTRODUCTION   | 200        |
| 9.2   | THEORETICAL UNDERSTANDINGS OF ‘COMMUNITY’ AND A ‘SENSE OF COMMUNITY’     | 201        |
| 9.3   | CATHOLICISM AND THE CONCEPT OF COMMUNITY                                 | 203        |
| 9.4   | A ‘SENSE OF COMMUNITY’   | 205        |
| 9.4.1   | <i>‘Everyone knows everyone’</i>   | 205        |
| 9.4.2   | <i>Attitudes and values</i>  | 206        |
| 9.4.3   | <i>‘Catholic community’</i>  | 208        |
| 9.5   | THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL HIERARCHY IN PROMOTING A ‘SENSE OF COMMUNITY’     | 212        |
| 9.6   | REFLECTIONS ON THE POSITIVE VALUE OF A ‘SENSE OF COMMUNITY’              | 214        |
| 9.7   | COMMUNITY BETTER CREATED BY CATHOLIC SCHOOLS?                            | 215        |
| 9.7.1   | <i>Reflections on the secular nature of the ‘sense of community’</i>     | 216        |
| 9.8   | THEORETICAL REFLECTIONS ON THE CATHOLIC SCHOOL AS A ‘COMMUNITY OF FAITH’ | 217        |
| 9.9   | CONCLUSION   | 221        |
| <b>CHAPTER 10: DRAWING THE BOUNDARIES</b>   |  | <b>222</b> |
| 10.1  | INTRODUCTION   | 222        |
| 10.2  | THEORETICAL REFLECTIONS OF THE CONCEPT OF BOUNDARIES                     | 222        |
| 10.3  | A BARRIER: THE ADMISSIONS POLICY   | 225        |
| 10.4  | AN EXTERNAL BOUNDARY: THE ‘OTHER’ SCHOOL                                 | 228        |
| 10.5  | AN INTERNAL BOUNDARY: THOSE OF NO FAITH                                  | 232        |
| 10.6  | AN INTERNAL BOUNDARY: NON-BRITISH CATHOLICS                              | 233        |
| 10.7  | AN INTERNAL BOUNDARY: MEMBERS OF OTHER FAITH TRADITIONS                  | 234        |
| 10.8  | THE CATHOLIC SCHOOL AND OTHER FAITH TRADITIONS                           | 237        |
| 10.9  | CROSSING THE BOUNDARIES: BRIDGE BUILDING                                 | 240        |
| 10.10   | THE RESEARCHER’S VIEWS OF THE BOUNDARY                                   | 242        |
| 10.11   | CONCLUSION   | 243        |
| <b>CHAPTER 11: THE CATHOLIC SECONDARY SCHOOL AND THE CATHOLIC FAITH TRADITION</b> |  | <b>245</b> |
| 11.1  | INTRODUCTION   | 245        |
| 11.2  | AN UNBROKEN CHAIN OF MEMORY  | 246        |
| 11.2.1  | <i>The school chapel</i>   | 247        |
| 11.2.2  | <i>The celebration of Mass</i>   | 248        |

|   |   |            |
|---|---|------------|
| 11.3  | THE CATHOLIC SCHOOL AND TRANSMISSION OF RELIGIOUS CAPITAL | 250        |
| 11.3.1  | <i>Religious Education</i>                                | 251        |
| 11.3.2  | <i>A means of transmission - the Catholic staff</i>       | 253        |
| 11.4  | CHALLENGES TO GENERATION AND CONTROL OF RELIGIOUS CAPITAL | 254        |
| 11.5  | VICARIOUS MEMORY  | 256        |
| 11.6  | PRECARIOUS MEMORY   | 258        |
| 11.7  | MANUFACTURING MEMORY                                      | 260        |
| 11.8  | A FAILURE OF TRANSMISSION?                                | 261        |
| 11.9  | SPIRITUAL CAPITAL   | 263        |
| 11.10   | CATHOLIC STUDENTS AS 'BRICOLEURS'                         | 264        |
| 11.10.1   | <i>Transformed retention</i>                              | 266        |
| 11.11   | THE CATHOLIC SCHOOL AS CREATOR OF A CATHOLIC IDENTITY     | 267        |
| 11.12   | CONCLUSION  | 269        |
| <b>CHAPTER 12: THE CATHOLIC SCHOOL: CREATOR OF BONDS AND BRIDGES?</b> |   | <b>270</b> |
| 12.1  | INTRODUCTION  | 270        |
| 12.2  | A COHESIVE COMMUNITY?                                     | 271        |
| 12.2.1  | <i>Perceptions of shared Catholic identity</i>            | 271        |
| 12.2.2  | <i>Shared experiences</i>                                 | 272        |
| 12.2.3  | <i>Shared Values</i>                                      | 272        |
| 12.2.4  | <i>A 'sense of community'</i>                             | 273        |
| 12.3  | THE SECULAR ROOTS OF BONDING CAPITAL                      | 274        |
| 12.4  | THE CATHOLIC ROOTS OF BONDING CAPITAL                     | 275        |
| 12.5  | BRIDGING CAPITAL IN THE CATHOLIC SCHOOLS STUDIED          | 277        |
| 12.6  | A CATHOLIC UNDERSTANDING OF COMMUNITY COHESION            | 279        |
| 12.7  | FAITH SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY COHESION                      | 282        |
| 12.8  | THE ADMISSIONS POLICY                                     | 283        |
| 12.9  | THE CATHOLIC SCHOOL CURRICULUM                            | 286        |
| 12.10   | CATHOLIC RE AND OTHER FAITH TRADITIONS                    | 287        |
| 12.11   | CONCLUSION  | 294        |
| <b>CONCLUSION</b>   |   | <b>295</b> |
| THE CATHOLICITY OF THE CATHOLIC SCHOOL                                |   | 295        |
| <i>Students' perception of a Catholic identity</i>                    |   | 297        |
| TRANSMISSION OF THE FAITH TRADITION                                   |   | 299        |
| A COHESIVE COMMUNITY  |   | 301        |
| COMMUNITY COHESION  |   | 302        |
| IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FAITH SCHOOL DEBATE                              |   | 304        |
| IMPLICATIONS FOR THE CATHOLIC SECONDARY SCHOOL                        |   | 305        |
| IMPLICATIONS FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN COMMUNITY SCHOOLS             |   | 306        |
| IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH                                      |   | 307        |
| CONCLUSION  |   | 309        |
| <b>APPENDIX A</b>   |   | <b>310</b> |
| DESCRIPTION OF CASE STUDY SCHOOLS                                     |   | 310        |
| <i>a) Selected case study schools</i>                                 |   | 310        |
| <i>b) The non-selected schools</i>                                    |   | 312        |
| <b>APPENDIX B</b>   |   | <b>314</b> |

|   |            |
|---|------------|
| LIST OF INTERVIEWS- IN THE THREE CASE STUDY SCHOOLS | 314        |
| INTERVIEWS – OUTSIDE SELECTED CASE STUDY SCHOOLS    | 315        |
| KEY TO INTERVIEWS REPORTED IN TEXT                  | 315        |
| SAMPLE INTERVIEW SCHEDULE - SEPTEMBER 2006          | 316        |
| <b>APPENDIX C</b>                                   | <b>319</b> |
| CATHOLIC ARTEFACTS- THE RESULTS OF NVIVO SEARCH     | 319        |
| <b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>                                 | <b>322</b> |

## List of Tables

|         |  |     |
|---------|--|-----|
| Table 1 | Student's descriptions of Catholic identity..... | 153 |
| Table 2 | List of interviews in selected schools .....     | 314 |
| Table 3 | Individual interviews .....                      | 315 |
| Table 4 | Key to abbreviations .....                       | 315 |



## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisors, to Professor Eleanor Nesbitt who has been always supportive and whose thought- provoking discussions have contributed much to the development of my learning, and also to my co-supervisor Professor Leslie Francis, whose critical insights have been invaluable. I would like to thank all the participants in this research for their contributions and most importantly for giving up their time to become involved in this project, as without this there would be no research project. I am very grateful for the consent given by the Diocesan Directors of Education, and the head teachers of all the Catholic schools involved in this research. I am very grateful for the support from the head teachers, all my colleagues, and my students in the schools in which I have been teaching. I would like to express my thanks to the Training and Development Agency Post Graduate Professional Development Fund for the financial support that enabled me to complete this thesis. My enormous thanks to my family and friends, especially to my husband Malcolm, my father John Randall Hyett, and my daughters Katharine, Emily and Siobhan, who have supported me throughout these five years with great patience and encouragement.

## **Declaration**

I declare that this thesis is entirely my own work, except where otherwise stated, and that none of it has appeared before in print. I confirm that this thesis has not been submitted for a degree at another university.

## **Abstract**

This is an ethnographic study of a small sample of Catholic secondary schools in England evaluating their role within the Catholic faith tradition and their contribution to community cohesion. The research is firmly based within an ethnographic framework; it explores the perception of Catholic schools by members, in particular the young people, of the Catholic school community. The ethnographic data was collected through semi-structured focus group interviews and observations. The understanding of religion is developed from the work of Hervieu-Léger on religion as a chain of memory. The concept of social capital in the form of bonding and bridging, and both religious and spiritual capital provides a framework to understand the factors within Catholic schools, which are perceived to create a Catholic community and those which are perceived to develop or hinder cohesion in plural society.

The students' understandings of their Catholic identity were diverse and fragmentary, with precarious links to the Catholic Church as an institution. However, there was a valuing of aspects of the Catholic faith tradition which were used to construct their own understanding of Catholicism, leading to a conclusion that the Catholic school is a source of spiritual capital for its members. The participants perceived their schools to have a Catholic nature, a strong 'sense of community'. The Catholic schools were good generators of bonding capital, although this was focused on the school rather than the wider Catholic community. Perceptions of the boundaries of the school focused on everyday encounters with outsiders such as 'the school next door' rather than members of other faith communities. This research has implications: for the faith school debate and issues concerning social cohesion; for the Catholic school's role in the transmission of the faith tradition and for an understanding of young people's Catholic identity.

## **Glossary**

**Baptism:** A sacrament of initiation in the Catholic Church, which involves a ceremonial immersion in water.

**Benediction:** A Catholic service, which consists of the blessing of the people by the priest, with the Host (the consecrated bread) exposed in a monstrance (a receptacle in which the host is displayed).

**Bishops' Conference of England and Wales:** A permanent assembly of Catholic bishops in the two countries.

**Blessed Sacrament:** A Catholic devotional term for the bread and wine used in Mass after they have been consecrated.

**Bricolage:** A term used by Hervieu-Léger to describe the construction or creation of a religious identity from fragments of the religious tradition.

**Bricoleur:** A term used by Hervieu-Léger to describe someone who constructs his or her religious identity from fragments of the religious tradition.

**Catechesis:** Religious instruction and formation for those preparing for Catholic baptism and for all Catholics in the various stages of spiritual development.

**CES:** The Catholic Education Service supports Catholic schools, seeks to implement the wishes of the Bishops' Conference and represents Catholic education policy to the government.

**Community Cohesion:** As defined by the British government is a cohesive community is one where: there is a common vision and a sense of belonging; the diversity of people's different backgrounds and circumstances is appreciated and positively valued; those from different backgrounds have similar life opportunities; and strong and positive relationships are being developed between people from different backgrounds and circumstances in the workplace, in schools and within neighbourhood (Local Government Association, 2002).

**Confirmation:** One of the seven Catholic sacraments, a rite of initiation, which occurs after Baptism, in the dioceses in this research the young people would receive this sacrament between the ages of 12-16 years.

**Congregation for Catholic Education:** The pontifical congregation responsible for education in Catholic schools in the Vatican.

**Corpus Christi Procession:** A procession through the town on the feast of Corpus Christi, a feast in honour of the Eucharist, traditionally the first Thursday after Trinity Sunday.

**DFES:** British government Department for Education and Skills.

**DCSF:** British government Department for Children, Schools and Families.

**Diocese:** The district comprising a number of parishes under the jurisdiction of a Bishop.

**Enrichment:** Extra-curricular activities provided by the school, often within the ordinary school day.

**Every Child Matters:** A British government initiative (2003), which aims to improve the well being of children and young people from birth to the age of 19.

**Fairtrade:** A trading partnership, based on dialogue, transparency and respect that seeks greater equity in international trade. Often schools, churches and other community groups sell a selection of Fairtrade products to raise awareness of and to support the campaign for Fairtrade.

**First Holy Communion:** This is the name given to a Catholic's first reception of Holy Communion; traditionally it is marked by a special ceremony. The age of the first reception differs in different dioceses; in the dioceses in this research children would usually make their First Holy Communion around the age of 8 or 9 years.

**GCE:** General Certificate of Education, examinations usually taken over a two year period in school years 12 and 13.

**GCSE:** General Certificate of Secondary Education, examinations usually taken at the end of school year 11, around the age of 16 years.

**Hail Mary prayer:** A traditional Catholic prayer requesting the intercession of the Virgin Mary.

**Holy Day of Obligation:** A feast day when Catholic are obliged to attend a celebration of Mass.

**Key Stages:** English and Welsh education is divided into 5 Key Stages (KS), KS1 age 5-7 years, KS2 age 8-11 years, KS3 age 11-13 years, KS 4 age 14-16 years and KS5 age over 16 years.

**Lay Chaplain:** A non-ordained Catholic who works on behalf of the Catholic Church in schools, prisons or hospitals.

**Looked After Children:** Children who are cared for by the local authority.

**Lourdes:** A Catholic place of pilgrimage in southwest France, where in 1858 Bernadette Soubirous claimed to see visions of the Virgin Mary.

**Mass: Roman** Catholic celebration of the Eucharist, Holy Communion.

**May procession:** The statue of the Virgin Mary is carried around the town or parish in a procession.

**Ofsted:** Office for Standards in Education responsible for inspections of schools in England.

**Reconciliation:** Sacrament of reconciliation, otherwise known as confession or penance. After confession of his or her sins to a confessor (an ordained priest) the penitent receives absolution.

**Recusant:** A Roman Catholic who remained true to the Catholic faith during the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries in England.

**RE:** Religious Education.

**REDCo:** An international research project REDCo: **R**eligion in **E**ducation. A contribution to **D**ialogue or a factor in **C**onflict in transforming societies of European countries, is a major research project on religion and education funded by the European Commission. Further details can be found at:  
<http://www.redco.uni-hamburg.de/web/3480/3483/index.html>

**Rosary:** a string of beads used in prayers in the Catholic Church, and the prayer, which is said with the aid of the beads.

**Sacraments:** **Roman** Catholicism recognises seven sacraments: Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Eucharist, Reconciliation, Marriage, Ordination, and Anointing of the Sick.

**St Vincent de Paul (SVP) society:** an international Christian voluntary organisation dedicated to tackling poverty and disadvantage by providing practical assistance to those in need, SVP youth groups are present in many Catholic schools in England.

**Second Vatican Council:** a council of the Roman Catholic Church (1962-65) called by Pope John XXIII.

**Section 48 inspections:** Diocesan inspections of Religious Education in a Church schools according to section 48 of the 2005 Education Act.

**SEF:** Self Evaluation Form introduced by Ofsted and completed by schools.

**Statemented pupils:** Pupils with special educational needs who have obtained a legally binding account of their needs and the provisions that will be made to meet them.

**Taizé:** an ecumenical Christian monastic community at Taizé in France, a site of pilgrimage for young people.



**Voluntary Aided (VA) school:** state funded schools - mainly faith schools - where the governing body contributes to building costs and sets the admissions criteria. The majority of Catholic schools are voluntary aided schools.

**Voluntary Controlled (VC) school:** state-funded schools similar to voluntary aided schools, where a foundation or trust has some influence in the running of the school, but where the local authority employs the staff and sets admissions criteria.

**World Youth Day (WYD):** a worldwide Catholic youth event organised in a different venue every three years.

\* All names of schools and participants in this research have been anonymised and pseudonyms used to ensure confidentiality.

# **Introduction**

## **Research context**

The place of the Catholic school in England in the twenty-first century is subject to much debate; it is claimed that faith schools are an anachronism, places of indoctrination and an obstacle to community cohesion. The aim of this thesis is to address the issue of the lack of empirical research to substantiate or rebut such claims. This thesis sets out to address the following research questions.

1. In what ways does a Catholic school reflect the Catholic faith tradition in a plural society?
2. What are the ways in which a Catholic school ensures transmission of the Catholic faith tradition?
3. To what extent does a Catholic school form a cohesive community?
4. To what extent does a Catholic school contribute to, or detract from, community cohesion?

These questions will be addressed through a small-scale ethnographic case study of three Catholic secondary schools in England, with the findings informed by Hervieu-Léger's work on religion as a chain of memory and analysed through the lens of social capital theory. This research will examine these issues through an exploration of student and staff perceptions of Catholicity of their Catholic school, their own Catholic identity and the boundaries of their school community.

### **The value of educational research**

Research is any 'systematic, critical and self-critical enquiry, which aims to contribute to the advancement of knowledge' (Stenhouse [1975] cited in Pring, 2000, p. 497). Educational research has been much criticised (Hargreaves, 2003) for failing to contribute to this advancement of knowledge. Bassey (2003) wished to draw a distinction between social sciences research undertaken in an educational setting and educational research undertaken to improve educational action. This is perhaps a false distinction, as the latter aim does not exclude the former. Educational research must aim to contribute to the improvement of educational action, but it should not be purely driven by the need for improvements in practice or policy, it should be rooted in theory and contribute to the advancement of knowledge within the social sciences.

### **Reflection on the role of researcher**

The role of the researcher has to be made visible in any study, in particular in an ethnographic study where the researcher is an integral part of the data generation. I have experienced Catholic schools as a Religious Education teacher, parent and foundation governor. The role of the researcher is sometimes enhanced and sometimes challenged by these experiences (see Chapter 4). The research was prompted by a growing awareness that neither the view of Catholic schools presented by those opposed to faith schools, nor that presented by the Catholic Church corresponded to the experience of the majority of staff and students within the Catholic secondary schools known to me. With any research into religion the

beliefs of the researcher are important, no one is a detached observer, and yet a researcher's position is no more fixed than any of the participants in the research. There is a need to clarify the researcher's stance so as to enable the reader to be aware of any bias, so I would define myself as a Christian, a member of the Catholic Church, who was born and brought up in an active Anglican family. Membership of the Catholic Church meant many participants viewed me as an insider, yet the position of researcher placed me as an outsider. This insider/outsider issue is discussed in more detail in Chapter 4.

## **Overview of the thesis**

An investigation into some of the issues of the current faith school debate in England and their relevance to the Catholic school in England is outlined in Chapter 1. It continues with an examination of the changing nature of the Catholic school in the twenty-first century, in the light of the changes in the Catholic community following the Second Vatican Council (1960s) and the increasingly plural nature of English society. The second part of the chapter evaluates a sample of previous research undertaken in Catholic secondary schools, with Catholic students and in schools of other faith traditions. This literature review highlights the lack of empirical research in Catholic secondary schools. The last section of this chapter sets out two themes that weave throughout the thesis, the Catholicity of the Catholic school and the challenges of community cohesion.

Chapter 2 explores the sociological understanding of religion that underpins this study. In recent years the strength of the secularisation theory has been challenged

and this chapter considers the French sociologist Hervieu-Léger's (2000) re-definition of religion as a chain of memory. Religion is not disappearing, it is just transforming or metamorphosing; the memory of religious traditions is fragmenting. This understanding offers an effective tool for analysing the perceptions of Catholicism found in a Catholic school. It may illuminate the way in which Catholic students approach the Catholic faith tradition and develop their own religious identity. Research in the field of congregational studies (Guest, Tusting, & Woodhead, 2004) and Ammerman's (2007) research into 'everyday' religion reflects a similar understanding of religion, looking at religion as a lived experience rather than a system of beliefs or individual spirituality.

This sociological definition of religion fits well with the concept of social capital and Chapter 3 examines the development of this concept and its value in analysing religion. The concept of social capital with its sub-categories of bonding or bridging and religious or spiritual capital enable religion to be examined through the networks it creates and generates. These concepts focus, as did the previous chapter, on the community aspect of religion. The chapter further explores the differing interpretations of religious and spiritual capital and seeks to establish a clear working definition of these concepts. The concept of social capital is useful in both quantitative and qualitative studies; the next two chapters consider why this research is rooted within a qualitative framework.

Chapters 4 and 5 explore ethnography as a methodology for educational research. An ethnographic study faces many challenges, from gaining initial access to the validity of any findings. However an ethnographic study of Catholic schools in

the twenty-first century will be a valuable contribution to the debate surrounding faith schools, the development of Catholic education and religious education. Ethnography is a useful method of research within a school setting; it is flexible and able to reflect the ‘messiness’ of life. Chapter 5 outlines the methods employed in the research, namely participant observations and semi-structured interviews. These methods will allow the generation of data from the participants’ viewpoint, this reflects a key theme of this research, namely the value of the child’s perspective and the view of the child as active in creating his or her own identities.

The central section of the thesis is found in chapters 6 to 10, which report the findings of the ethnographic study. The study took place over a period of five years, involving investigative visits to six Catholic schools and a final selection of three Catholic secondary schools. As with any ethnography the raw data appears as unstructured and unconnected ideas. At first the relevance of participants arguing as to whether they are allowed to eat their lunch in the school chapel, or whether the students in the school next door respect their teachers, seems unclear. Gradually a pattern begins to emerge and the framework develops to examine the data. The first research question is investigated in chapters 6 and 7. Chapter 6 explores participants’ perceptions of the Catholicity of their schools; it considers the students reflections on the celebration of Mass in school and the experience of a pilgrimage to Lourdes. Chapter 7 explores further the fragmentation of Catholicity in the schools through an investigation of the variety of ways in which the participants defined their Catholic identity, ranging from the ‘hardcore’ Catholic to the Catholic atheist. Chapter 8 considers research question 2, through

an examination of the perceptions of the Catholic values that underpin the school ethos and the transmission of the Catholic faith tradition within the schools. Chapter 9 focuses on research question 3, through an exploration of participants' perceptions of the 'sense of community' within the schools. It examines the perceptions of the networks a Catholic school maintains with Catholicism and the bonds it generates between its members. Chapter 10 addresses research question 4, through an investigation of the perceived boundaries of the Catholic school such as the admissions policy, the attitudes towards other local schools and the participants' perception of other faith traditions.

The last section of the thesis analyses these ethnographic findings through the lens of social capital. Chapter 11 explores the generation of religious and spiritual capital in the Catholic school. It investigates the strength of the perceptions of the Catholicity of the Catholic school and considers whether the Catholic school is no longer generating religious capital attached to the Catholic Church as an institution, but is instead developing a more fluid form of spiritual capital. Chapter 12 examines the place of the Catholic school in a plural society, analysing the extent to which the Catholic school generates bonding and/or bridging capital. It continues with a conclusion which draws together the main themes of the research and sets out some of the possible implications for this research: its contributions to the faith school debate; to an understanding of Catholic identity; and its relevance for Catholic schools; and Religious Education in non-Catholic schools.

# **Chapter 1: Setting the scene: the Catholic secondary school in twenty-first century England**

## **1.1 Introduction**

This chapter will examine literature relevant to the Catholic school in England in the twenty-first century. The first section considers the issues surrounding faith schools in England, the second section the historical roots of the Catholic school in England and the educational policy that underlies them. The third section evaluates a sample of the educational research into Catholic schools. It also reviews some of the relevant studies into attitudes of Catholic students and studies of other faith schools.

## **1.2 Faith schools debate**

In the United Kingdom in recent years, the debate about faith schools has come to the forefront following the acts of terrorism of 9/11 in New York and of July 2005 in London and an increased awareness of the problem of social cohesion in many areas of society (Jackson, 2004b, p. 51; H. Johnson, 2006; McKinney, 2006, p. 109; Parker-Jenkins, Hartas, & Irving, 2005). The debate has also been fostered by a government policy to actively encourage state-funded faith schools (Jackson, 2004b, p. 38). The debate often appears to assume that all faith schools are the same, and the differences are not always acknowledged in the literature. It is important to acknowledge that there are differences between long established schools and recent establishments (Grace, 2009b; McKinney, 2006); between



schools of different faith traditions, and between schools of the same faith tradition (Jackson, 2004b, p. 46).

The debate surrounding faith schools embraces a variety of concerns (Jackson, 2004b, p. 51); relevant for this research are two aspects of the debate, whether they encourage indoctrination and thus are a threat to the child's autonomy and whether they are divisive and thus a threat to social cohesion. Faith schools are seen by some to belong to a previous age, not to fit in with the rational epistemology of today's secular liberal society (McKinney, 2006, p. 110) and to be incompatible with human rights especially the rights of the child (Marple, 2005; Parker-Jenkins, 2005, p. 36). However, the British Catholic educationalist Terence McLaughlin (1996, p. 147) claims that faith schools are compatible with human rights, especially if they are characterised by 'openness with roots', rooted in their faith but open to society. This strand of the debate will be developed further in discussions about the students' perceptions of their religious identity and the role of religious education within the Catholic schools (see Chapters 7 and 8).

Another major aspect of the faith school debate is the issue of divisiveness, and of social cohesion (Jackson, 2004b; Short, 2002). The case of Northern Ireland with its Protestant and Catholic schools is often cited (McKinney, 2006, p. 109; Parker-Jenkins, et al., 2005), although this situation was complicated by many factors and the evidence that faith-based schooling causes or contributes to its divisiveness is not clear-cut (Grace, 2003, p. 159). For example the research of Greer (1993, p. 458) in Northern Ireland has concluded that 'the young people

most favourably disposed towards religion were also most open to members of other religious groups'. More relevant to the debate are claims (Kymlicka 1999) that faith schools start from a position of segregation from society; thus no matter what they teach they are by their very nature detrimental to social cohesion (Jackson, 2004b). The debate about faith schools and social cohesion will be addressed fully in Chapter 12.

Proponents of faith schools argue that such claims are based on 'out-dated and distorted understandings of a particular faith community' (Grace, 2003, p. 163), or that faith schools 'are an important element of the institutional architecture that enables cultural identities to flourish and be protected' (Flint, 2007, p. 264). They also dispute the claim that community schools 'are neutral' (Flint, 2009, p. 177; Russell, 2007, p. 254), and that they all fulfil the aim 'to enrich the community through its acquaintance with diversity' (Pring, 2007). Given the contentious nature of faith schools Gerald Grace, a leading British Catholic educationalist argues that they have become a priority area for research as 'large claims are made on this subject area with little reference to empirical research' (2003, p. 160, 2009a). There is a lack of empirical research from secular educationalists who view research on faith schools as only being of value to faith communities, but also the faith communities have not encouraged 'systematic and critical investigations' into their own faith schools (Grace, 2003, p. 150).

This research aims to address this gap in empirical research. It will focus on Catholic secondary schools in England, although there may be similarities with schools of other faith traditions, Catholic schools in England have their own

unique history and educational philosophy. In recent years Catholic schools in England have become increasingly popular not only for achieving good academic results, but also as a provider of good religious and moral education (Grace, 2002, p. 3). The next section examines in more detail, the historical background to the establishment of Catholic schools.

### **1.3 Catholic secondary schools in England**

In order to understand more fully the Catholic secondary school in England it is necessary to understand its complex relationship with the Catholic Church; as the Congregation for Catholic Education's (1998) document 'The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium' states, the 'Catholic identity of the school derives from the Church' (Engebretson, 2008, p. 152). The Catholic Church in England viewed the establishment of Catholic schools as always being at the forefront of its mission. At the very first synod following the restoration of the Hierarchy of the Catholic Bishops in 1850, the Bishops stated the aim of providing before all else Catholic schools, even to the extent of building a school with a chapel in preference to a church without a school (Arthur, 1995, p. 15). The Bishops' made rapid progress towards their aim to provide a 'Catholic Education for a Catholic child' (McLaughlin, O'Keefe, & O'Keefe, 1996, p. 4). Catholic secondary schools were managed by religious orders and the Bishops were responsible for the primary schools; the latter were organised on a parochial basis, managed by the priest.

[The aim was] to preserve the religious culture between parish, school and home, which assisted the Church in its mission of 'preserving the

faithful' in a world sheltered from alien influences. (McLaughlin, et al., 1996, p. 4)

The nineteenth century Catholic Bishops sought to create an environment to separate the Catholics from mainstream society, although there was conflict between the Bishops and the more mission orientated aims of the religious orders (Grace, 2002).

In the twentieth century the Catholic Bishops of England and Wales defended and developed their Catholic schools. Their stance on the value of Catholic schools was supported by the Vatican, Canon 1374 of the Catholic code of Canon Law, 'forbade attendance of Catholics at non-Catholic schools' while Canon 2319 explained that the sanction for failing to comply with this was ex-communication (Arthur, 1995, p. 26). Following the 1944 Education Act in England Catholic schools became voluntary aided, whereby the Catholic Church appointed foundation governors, and part funded the capital expenditure (Arthur, 1995, p. 29). This is one of the major differences between Catholic and Church of England schools; where at least half of the latter schools opted for voluntary controlled status (Francis & Astley, 2002), and they are more likely to serve the local population not just local Anglican children (Francis & Robbins, 2005, p. 104). McLaughlin (1996) argues the 1944 Education Act marked the beginning of a new more positive relationship between the Catholic Church and the State, by the mid 1960s Catholic schools were serving 60 % of the Catholic population in England (1996, p.5-6). This more positive era was set to end when the 1988 Education Act challenged the Catholic Bishops control over their schools with the introduction of the policy of allowing schools to opt out of local authority control

and establish grant maintained status (McLaughlin, et al., 1996). Although the Bishops were opposed, the increased parental power (Arthur, 1995) resulted in 128 Catholic schools being grant maintained by 1994 (McLaughlin, et al., 1996, p. 6).

Applying the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu's concept of field, Grace (2002) concludes that Catholic education emphasises vocation, idealism, and consensus, and avoids or represses conflicts which should be confronted. The Catholic Church in England has thus alienated a sector of middle class Catholics who are choosing academic success over Catholic faith education. For Bourdieu an ideological consequence of symbolic power is that the dominated accept as legitimate their own condition of domination; until the 1980s, the laity in England accepted this (Grace 2002, p.28). However, following the governments empowering of parents, the authority of the Catholic Church was challenged. In the dispute over whether the Cardinal Vaughan School should become grant-maintained, Cardinal Hume appealed to the Vatican for support, where Cardinal Baum, Prefect of the Congregation of Faith emphasised the ecclesial obligation of Catholic parents and governors. This however had little effect, as school governors defied Episcopal authority and the school became grant maintained (Grace, 2002, p. 36). The implications of this transfer of power from the Church to parents has far reaching consequences in the development of Catholic schools today, as parental power has become more important than ecclesial power. Catholic schools no longer reflect the internal coherence of community, but some members are opposing an hierarchy who wish 'to impose restrictions on [them]' (Tobler, 2003, p. 96).

Besides the challenge of increased parental power, the number of non-Catholics within Catholic schools is also a challenge for the hierarchy of the Catholic Church. The Bishop of Salford (1987) argued against any possibility of opening Catholic schools to non-Catholics as it ran the risk of undermining the character of Catholic schools (McClelland, 1996, p. 157). In the twenty-first century the Catholic Bishops' aim for Catholic schools remains that:

A Catholic school is never simply a school for those who choose it. A Catholic school is always, first of all, a school for Catholics. (Bishop of Birmingham Vincent Nichols in a letter to Warwickshire schools, dated 21st October 2004 cited in Stock, 2005, p.7)

The central purpose of the Catholic school is: to assist in the Church's universal mission; to assist parents in the education of their children; to serve the needs of the local church; and to be a service to society (Stock, 2005, p. 16).

[A Catholic school] transmits Catholic truths and values. Everything else no matter how important is secondary to this. (Haldane, 1996, p. 135)

However, this maintenance of the Catholicity is becoming increasingly difficult in a society where there are not only fewer members of the Catholic faith, but also the Catholic community itself is changing. (Throughout this thesis 'Catholicity' is the term used to refer to the 'quality of being Catholic').

## **1.4 The Catholic community in England**

The Catholic schools of England now serve a different Catholic population to that of the nineteenth century. The nineteenth century Catholic population was

transformed with the influx of Irish immigrants following the Irish potato famine (Arthur, 1995, p. 13), resulting in four strands to the Catholic population in England: Irish immigrants; recusant Catholics (Catholic families who retained the Catholic faith from the time of the English reformation); converts; and immigrants from Italy and Poland (Hornsby-Smith, 1987). The ideal Catholic community was seen as a strongly bonded community centred around the parish and the priest, an all-embracing community, with parish organisations which satisfied everyone's need from cradle to grave (Hornsby-Smith, 2004). Being a Catholic was involuntary and immovable, part of one's intrinsic identity (2004, p. 44). May's research in the early 1960s describe the Catholics in Liverpool as forming a cohesive community (Egan, 1988, p. 67). However, others such as Hornsby-Smith (1987) argues that this was an utopian view. Ward's (1965) study of a Catholic parish in Liverpool in the 1950's found that although the parishioners exhibited strong vertical links with strong attachment to the parish church and the parish, the horizontal links, the bonds with their fellow parishioners were much weaker (Woodhead, Guest, & Tusting, 2004, p. 4). It is likely that Catholics were never united as one community separate from the rest of society: even in the nineteenth century there existed clear divisions between the English Catholics and the Irish immigrants (Hickman, 1995).

In the early twentieth century there could be distinguished four different strands: descendants of recusant Catholics, descendants of Irish immigrants, converts and other immigrants from Eastern Europe (Hornsby-Smith, 1987). In the latter half of the twentieth century the Catholic community was further divided in a variety of ways, through generational differences (Hornsby-Smith, 2004), class, and

immigration although the immigrants were from Poland rather than Ireland. Theological differences were more prominent following the Second Vatican Council in the 1960's, between the traditionalist who felt that too much had changed and the liberals who felt the changes were not being implemented fast enough (Hornsby-Smith, 1987, p. 35). Other lines of division were drawn between regular, infrequent and non attendees at Church, or between those espousing a more political form of Catholicism with its roots in liberation theology, and those involved in Charismatic Catholicism. Recent research by McGrail (2004) has highlighted that for some there is now a much narrower understanding of Catholic community focusing only on regular Sunday Mass goers. The Catholic community is thus a community in which there are many internal divisions. Hornsby-Smith (2004, p. 54) argues that this supports the French sociologist Hervieu-Léger's view of the increasing fragmentation of society (see Chapter 2).

There is also an increasing lack of visible barriers and differences with the secular society (McLaughlin, 1996, p. 137). Since 1945, the barriers that formerly segregated Catholics from society have largely disappeared and there has been a weakening of the distinctive subculture (Hornsby-Smith, 1987, p. 214). The Catholic community is no longer highly visible, unlike the Muslim community, which is marked out as an identifiable minority by colour, ethnicity and or dress (Flint, 2007, p. 253). From the above it can be seen that the Catholic community has both internal divisions and weak external boundaries and it is in this milieu that Catholic schools exist in England in the early twenty-first century.



## **1.5 A Catholic philosophy of Education**

Catholic education philosophy in England is interwoven with justification of Catholic schools (Arthur, 1995, p. 81). McLaughlin (1996, p. 137) argues the Catholic education philosophy has lacked clarity, as it is derived from Church documents and there is no great tradition of Catholic educational philosophers. Grace (2002) supports this view, that there is an ‘underdevelopment of Catholic philosophy of education. Catholic educators are forced to rely on publications and declarations of Vatican Congregation’ (2002, p. 17). Catholic education philosophy is derived from the documents produced by the Catholic Church, for example the Second Vatican Council’s Decree on Christian education (1965) *Gravissimum Educationis* (GE). McClelland (1996) argues that GE puts forward the *raison d’être* of Catholic schools.

...the conservation and the transmission of Divine Teaching and transcendental values, the commitment to missionary imperative of the propagation of the good news of the Gospel in and through the transformation of human lives in daily service. (1996, p. 155)

This view is reflected in other documents produced by the Catholic Church. There is not space here to complete a detailed review of the Catholic Church documents, such an account can be found in Grace (2002 pp17-23) or Egan (1998 pp19-40). The Congregation for Catholic Education has produced documents on: *The Catholic School* (1977); *Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith* (1982); *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School* (1988); *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium* (1997), and the Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales has published documents such as the *Religious*

Education Curriculum Directory (1996), Evaluating the Distinctive Nature of a Catholic school (1999), and Catholic Schools, Children of Other Faiths and Community Cohesion (2008). This next section explores the ways in which recognised Catholic educators view this connection between Catholic Church and the Catholic school.

The American Catholic education philosopher, Thomas Groome argues that the Catholic school should reflect the distinctiveness of Catholicism.

[I]ts positive anthropology of the person; its sacramentality of life; its communal emphasis...its commitment to tradition and its appreciation of rationality and learning...(1996, p. 108)

The Catholic school should be an ‘ecclesial community’ not a parish, but a community which, proclaims the Word, worships, witnesses the faith and looks after the welfare of its members. It ‘should intentionally catechise its students in the Christian story and vision’ (Groome, 1996, p. 118). However the schools should also be outward looking encouraging members to enter into dialogue with others. McLaughlin (1996, p. 141) maintains that Catholic education is distinct because of the direct connection with the Catholic faith, drawing on the Vatican documents. He asserts that Catholic schools are distinctive in their ‘embodiment of a view about the meaning of human persons and of human life’, ‘an aspiration to holistic influence’ and ‘religious and moral formation’. Kath Engebretson (2008, p. 157) a leading Australian Catholic educationalist, sums this up when she states that what makes the Catholic school distinctive is its ‘fidelity to Catholicism’.

The connection between the Catholic school and the Catholic Church is made visible in the support and direction given to Religious Education (RE) in Catholic schools in England. The Bishops Conference of England and Wales states that RE is of vital importance in the Catholic school, it is 'not just one subject amongst many, but the foundation of the entire educational process' (1996, p. 80). Religious Education is about catechesis or evangelisation (1996 p.10) and must aim to deepen an understanding of Catholic belief and faith. Religious Education is understood here not just to be curriculum RE, but as comprising also both collective worship and the Religious Education that takes place through the whole school ethos. However, classroom RE has a specific contribution (Catholic Bishops Conference of England and Wales, 2000 ). One of the aims of RE is to introduce young people to the Catholic faith.

[RE will] introduce those formulas [texts from the Bible, liturgy and traditional prayers] which develop young people's understanding of Catholic belief, these provide a common language and become 'memory of the church which maintains alive in us the presence of the Lord. (Catholic Bishops Conference of England and Wales, 1996, p. 11)

The Curriculum Directory (1996) provides detailed programmes of study for all key stages, from this, the RE programme Icons was developed by the National Project which was established by the Catholic Bishops to support the partnership of home, parish and school (Catholic Education Service, 2009). 'Icons' is a complete Key Stage 3 programme, which is the basis for the majority of the RE syllabuses in Catholic secondary schools in England and Wales and it was published with the authority of the Catholic Bishops of England and Wales.

Religious Education within the Catholic school is derived from the aims of the Bishops' Conference; it is supported by the Catholic Education Service and by diocesan educational services. There is thus a strong link between the Religious Education in Catholic schools and the hierarchy of the Catholic Church.

One of the issues to be explored in this research is the connection between theory and practice in Catholic schools; between the official view of the Catholic school as an integral part of the Catholic Church and the reality encountered by members of the Catholic school community. Tobler (2003) argues that the leaders of a community often present a closed view of the group (Jackson, 2003a, p. 9), while in reality group identity is in state of flux. Bauman's (1996) work on dominant and demotic discourse is also relevant here, (Jackson, 2003b, p. 73) as it appears that the development of Catholic schools, is influenced by the dominant discourse and that the demotic discourse is silenced. However this dominance by the hierarchy has been challenged in the last two decades in England and Catholic schools are not a simple reflection of the authorities teaching and the declarations of the Church (Grace, 2002, p. 36).

Arthur (1995) a leading British Catholic educationalist argued that he could identify three separate models of Catholic schools, the holistic, dualistic and pluralistic and that only the holistic model is closely linked to the Catholic faith tradition. Morris (1997) in a small study of two Catholic secondary school, identifies two different models of Catholic schools and argues that a Catholic school that includes the Catholic vision within its aims is a more effective school. Grace (2002) has come to the conclusion that 'there is...no simple unitary habitus

of Catholic socialisation despite the institutional Church's claim to be one and universal' (2002, p. 38). Grace (2002) attempts to distinguish the different varieties of habitus within Catholic schools; his work has shown that Bourdieu's concepts of field, habitus, and symbolic power are useful tools in an analysis of the Catholicity of Catholic schools.

## **1.6 Catholic schools and a plural society**

The terms plural, plurality and pluralism have become value-laden and it is important to establish a clear definition for this thesis. Pluralism is used most frequently to imply a positive view of plurality (Skeie, 2002). Skeie establishes a distinction between traditional and modern plurality, traditional plurality being 'the observable cultural diversity' in western society, while modern plurality reflects the fragmented nature of modern society (Jackson, 2004b). Within this thesis the term 'plural' is used to refer to the plurality of modern society in England, including thus the cultural diversity and the fragmentary nature of that society.

The last section outlined the Catholic Church's view of the Catholic school as an integral part of the mission, evangelisation and catechesis of the Church, but the Church also has to address the changes in modern society both internal and external to the Catholic school.

[The Congregation for Catholic Education has] consistently expounded the view that the Catholic school is an educational setting

in which a critical synthesis should occur between culture and Catholic religious vision. (Arthur, 1995, p. 80)

Recent publications from the Catholic Church, face the issue of a Catholic education for every Catholic child, in an age of a declining Catholic population and a more diverse and plural society.

‘Evaluating the distinctive nature of a Catholic school’ (Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, 1999) reiterates the view explained in ‘The Catholic school’ (1977) that you cannot separate the secular curriculum from the religious ‘since there is nothing which does not ultimately relate to God’ (Arthur 1995, p.183). This document seeks to balance two possibly conflicting aims, stressing on the one hand that the admissions policy must work to enhance the Catholic nature of the school, and remain aware of their responsibility to ‘proclaim the Gospel to all’, whilst also preparing children ‘for life in a pluralist society’.

‘On the Way to Life’ (OTWTL), a recent document produced by Catholic Education Service in conjunction with the Heythrop Institute (Hanvey & Carroll, 2005) sought to outline the challenges faced by the Catholic school in post modern society. OTWTL highlights the problem of the transmission of the Catholic faith tradition, ‘the death of the language of religion’ (p.28) and the weakening to the point of breaking of the traditional structure of home, school and parish. This document acknowledges that Catholic schools face the challenge of both internal and external secularisation.

‘Catholic schools, Children of Other faiths and Community Cohesion: Cherishing Education for Human Growth’ sought to develop a policy with regards to the number of children of other faiths within Catholic schools (Catholic Bishops Conference of England and Wales, 2008). It takes up the theme of the ‘ecology of human growth’ found in the teachings of Popes John Paul II and Benedict XVI. Education is thus the development of environments in which the human person flourishes and grows. The document acknowledges that Religious Education within Catholic schools is serving an increasingly diverse student body.

Catholic pupils and those of other faiths will each receive what is offered according to their capacity. Some will receive this teaching simply as religious education and grow in their religious literacy, others will be awakened to God’s presence in their lives; others will deepen their existing relationship with Christ as Lord. (Catholic Bishops Conference of England and Wales, 2008)

While accepting the teachings of the Second Vatican Council that ‘the Catholic church rejects nothing of what is true and holy in [other] religions’, the document emphasises that the primary responsibility for the spiritual development of children of other faiths rests with the families and faith communities of these pupils. The document argues that ‘Catholic schools are already very committed to promoting community cohesion’. These three documents confront the two main challenges facing the Catholic school increased secularisation and the plurality of society. The next section will examine a selection of the research that has been undertaken within Catholic secondary schools in the last fifty years.

## **1.7 Research in Catholic secondary schools**

Grace (2003, 2009a) has undertaken an extensive study of Catholic education in England and highlights a lack of research in this area, noting particularly the absence of detailed ethnographic research and research from pupils' perspectives. Egan (1988, p. 146) argues that the neglect of empirical research could prove costly to the development of the Catholic system. The reason for this lack of research is in part the structure of Catholic Higher Education in England and Wales, which unlike in the USA focused on training teachers for Catholic schools (Grace, 2002). Grace's own work on research into Catholic education is well respected; it forms the basis for Parker-Jenkins (2005) writings on Catholic schools. Convey (1992) identified three major strands in research into Catholic schooling: the first is what he calls 'foundational' examining how Catholic schooling affects religious development and attitudes. The second considers the work of Catholic schools amongst the disadvantaged, an area of Catholic schooling that is under threat as the number of religious orders in education decline (Grace, 2009a). The third strand is the consideration of the academic effectiveness of Catholic schools; this has engendered much interest in England in recent years as faith schools have been seen to out perform community schools. Morris (1997, 1998, 2005, 2010) has researched this latter area in some depth seeking to explore the factors responsible for academic attainment levels in Catholic schools. This section will evaluate some previous research into Catholic schools that is relevant to this research study.



Having noted Grace's claim about the paucity of research in this area, there are however a few interesting studies to be considered. Although the Catholic school system of the USA and Australia differs from the UK, research studies from these countries are included as they provide useful insights and a basis for comparison with research in English Catholic schools. Convey (1992) has evaluated the main research projects in Catholic schools in the USA and he notes that the three main researchers who have conducted research in Catholic high schools are Andrew Greeley, James Coleman and Anthony Bryk. Greeley has undertaken several research projects within the foundational strand, looking at the effect on pupils' religiosity, the two major projects being 'The education of Catholic Americans' (1966) and 'Catholic Schools in a declining Church' (1976). Greeley concluded that 'the effect of Catholic education on adult religious behaviour has been stronger in the post-consular years (post Vatican Two) than before' (Greeley, 1998, p. 183). This is in opposition to those (Arthur, 1995) who argues that the decline in church attendance is due to the weak habitus of the Catholic schools (Grace, 2002, p. 85). Greeley (1998, p. 183) also argues that his research has shown that 'those who attend Catholic schools are less prejudiced than Catholic who attend public schools and less prejudiced than all public school graduates'. His research presented a positive view of Catholic schools, as contributing to the social capital of some of the most disadvantaged in American society; he suggested that this stemmed from the strong academic and disciplinary system of these school, which was augmented by the presence of religious orders in the school (Grace, 2002, p.87). Greeley (1998, p. 187) argues further research is needed into the development of social capital in Catholic schools to both further

human understanding of social capital and to help facilitate increased resources within the Catholic school.

James Coleman's (1988) research is considered in more detail in Chapter 3; he argued that the academic achievements of Catholic schools with disadvantaged pupils, were the result of the school's possession of greater social capital, which itself was generated by the strong functional community of home and parish that surrounded the Catholic school. Leading American sociologists Anthony Bryk, Valerie Lee and Peter Holland (1993) conducted a major research project using statistical data from the 'High School and Beyond' project alongside detailed fieldwork in seven Catholic high schools (Grace, 2002, p. 92). They were looking primarily at school effectiveness and highlighted the factors they claimed influenced the academic success of these schools. The two main factors identified were the 'sense of community' generated within the school and within the local community, and the influence of the religious ideology underpinning the school (Grace 2003, p. 94). Bryk (1993) concludes that Catholic schools have been educating for citizenship long before it became fashionable, insofar as the basis of Catholic education is educating for the 'Common Good'. Bryk et al (1993) have 'shown empirically the substantial contribution made by Catholic schools to community resourcing and educational progress in American inner-cities' (Riley, Marks, & Grace, 2003).

In Australia, Lawrence Angus's ethnography (1988) of a Christian Brothers' school in the suburbs of an Australian town, provides an interesting insight into how a Catholic school deals with continuity and change, as the number of

teaching Brothers declines and there is increasing lay influence within the school. Angus's (1988) research question changed as he observed the school. He started by looking at pupils' perception of schooling and changed his focus to look at how a school reproduces itself over time, concluding that he is observing a school facing a crisis of identity (1988, p.192). Angus (1988, p.42) highlights a problem mentioned by other researchers (Burgess, 1983; Grace, 2002) that a major issue facing Catholic education is the lack of Catholic staff. Angus (1988) argued that the primary purpose of the Christian Brothers School was to educate working class Catholic boys into middle class citizens. Similarly, Hickman's (1995) research into the life of Irish Catholics in England led her to a similar conclusion.

One of the chief aims of Catholic state education in Britain has been to incorporate and denationalise the children of working-class Irish immigrants. (1995 p.12)

Angus (1988) and Hickman (1995) share the idea that the purpose of Catholic schools was 'socialisation of pupils', while Bryk (1993) sees Catholic education more as a challenge to social justice.

[Do] Catholic schools equip pupils to critique the prevailing culture of society, or do they simply prepare them to belong to this society and perform the same kind of roles as everyone else. (Sullivan, 2001, p. 12)

Sullivan argues that there is a need for further research into how 'pupils in Catholic schools could be better equipped to engage effectively in a pluralist society' (2001, p.203). This issue of the Catholic school and its contribution to social cohesion will be explored in depth in Chapter 12.

Other Australian studies have recognised that most students in Catholic schools are not active members of worshipping communities, Rymarz and Graham (2006) undertook a longitudinal study of Catholic students, investigating 'Core Catholics', those likely to be the core of future committed Catholic community. The study considered pupils' behaviour and attitudes and the schools' support of its 'Core Catholic' pupils. This research is useful in its means of identifying the religious commitment of Catholic pupils, also in the examination of Australian Catholic pupils' attitudes to their faith.

In England there have been a few research studies of Catholic schools, although nothing on the scale of Bryk et al (1993) in the USA, this next section will consider a few of the empirical studies into Catholic schools in England. Joan Brothers' research in Liverpool in 1964 explored the implications of post-war social change in Liverpool; she sought to evaluate how the setting up of Catholic grammar schools affected the Catholic community. Her most striking finding was that the students at the Catholic grammar schools saw the Catholic parish as irrelevant and of limited importance (Brothers, 1964, p. 171). As new educational structures developed the close parish-church-school relationship was failing to serve the religious and social needs of these grammar school students, their needs were fulfilled by the value system transmitted by the Catholic grammar school. Unfortunately her research was not replicated elsewhere in the country (Egan 1988, p67-69).

Josephine Egan's (1988) research in Catholic comprehensive schools in South Wales sought to evaluate the distinctive nature of the Catholic school. She

administered a questionnaire to a sample of fifth year (year 11) pupils in 16 different schools (p.140). Her key findings (p.140) were that pupils were happy to be in Catholic secondary schools, but they recognised that they were separated from a wider social context. They had a low regard for Religious Education within the Catholic system, there appeared to be inadequate moral and spiritual development, and the majority favoured a model of school that would be common to any good county school. In further analysis of findings (p.142) she found that those pupils who had a most positive view of a Catholic school were those from practicing Catholic homes. Egan's (p.144) findings highlighted the problems the Catholic school faces in retaining its distinctive nature, and they also reflect a lack of congruence between theory and practice in Catholic schools. Egan's research was further developed in association with Francis (Francis and Egan, 1993), when attitudes of Catholic pupils were compared across continents. Here the view that Catholic schools were most appreciated by practising Catholic pupils was reinforced, while non-Catholic and non-practising Catholics were seen as having negative attitudes to Catholic schools. Francis and Egan (1993) suggested that it was thus difficult to maintain that these schools 'represent a true community of faith'.

Robert Burgess's (1983) major ethnographic study of a Catholic Comprehensive School focused on the Newsom unit within that school. It considered how pupils who could not access the full curriculum functioned with their teachers in what became an alternative education unit within the school. The Headteacher stressed the Catholicity of the school; he was active himself in RE and assemblies (1983, p.32). He argued that the Catholicity was maintained by Catholic teachers, and

was concerned at the decreasing number of Catholic teachers. Although this study gives many insights into an ethnographic study of a school, the Catholic nature of the school is not highlighted and does not appear to be very relevant in the day-to-day life of the school. Burgess remarks that not all staff support the Catholic ethos of the school (p. 48-49). This study again highlighted the problem of how to maintain the Catholic ethos of the school as the number of Catholic teachers and in some cases the number of Catholic pupils diminishes. Vince Murray's study (1996) of a sixth form college in Birmingham describes the dispute between staff and governors over whether the college could remain Catholic when the number of Catholic pupils falls under a certain level. The Oratory fathers as foundation governors of the college wished to close the school in 1987 arguing that the low proportion of Catholics in the school meant it was unable to maintain its Catholic character (1996, p. 249).

James Arthur's (1995) research in Oxfordshire suggested that the Catholic ethos in Catholic schools was weakening. He maintains that the Catholic school ethos is becoming diluted as the schools are moving from being holistic to dualistic, academic with Catholic education bolted on, or to pluralistic where the Catholic element is just one among many. Arthur's research led to a very lively debate and he has been criticised for using a small sample (Grace, 2002, p. 11), and for failing to acknowledge the positive changes within Catholic education. Peter Hastings (1996) claims that Catholic schools are just moving from an immature oppressive form of Catholic education, to a more mature Catholicity which values 'openness and intellectual challenge'. Gerald Grace (2002) has undertaken extensive research into Catholic schools. In an attempt to understand the

challenges that Catholic schools face in their mission, he interviewed 60 Headteachers and 50 year 10 pupils in English Catholic secondary schools (2002, p.113). His research findings continue this theme of the challenges the Catholic school face in maintaining the Catholicity of the school and pupils in the face of increased secularisation and market pressures on the schools (2002, p. 237).

Other research projects have explored the issue of Catholic schools and social cohesion in Catholic primary schools, Breen's (2009) research explored the ways in which a Catholic primary school located in the centre of a large South-Asian community responded to the religious and ethnic diversity of its surroundings. John Sullivan (2001) has explored a possible conflict between the distinctive nature of the Catholic school and the trend towards more inclusive model of Catholic schooling, arguing that as Catholic education has become more inclusive, it has become less distinctive, which has led to 'blurring of the cognitive parameters of faith' (2001, p. 9). However he concludes that the two concepts are not mutually exclusive. Engebretson (2008) has gone further to argue that not only are the two not mutually exclusive but that, if a school is truly Catholic, it is called to an 'openness to all', as openness to other religions is 'a constitutive element of the Catholicity of the Catholic school' (2008, p.152). Catholic schools have also been included in other research which reflects on the issue of social cohesion, for example Ipgrave's research (2001) on inter-faith dialogue by email in primary schools and Allen and West's (2009) research into school admissions policies.

Research into schools of other faith traditions has also explored the challenge of maintaining the faith tradition and preparing students for life in a plural society. For example research into Jewish schools by Valins (2003), and Short (1994; 2002; 2003) explores the tension between transmission of the faith and cohesion with modern society. Pomson (2009) has brought together a number of research studies that explore the concept of community in Jewish day schools. Short and Lenga's (2002) work in Jewish primary schools reflects the diversity within faith schools in their approach to issues of multiculturalism and cohesion. Scholefield (2001) undertook a comparative study of a Catholic and Jewish high school, exploring the student's spiritual, moral, social and cultural values. Research into the newly established Muslim schools is still developing, there have been some useful studies (Gent, 2005), but comparisons with Catholic schools are not so relevant as Jewish studies given the differing nature of the faith communities in England.

## **1.8 Quantitative and Qualitative Studies**

The attitudes of Catholic students in Catholic schools to the values and beliefs of Christianity and Catholicism have been thoroughly explored in several large-scale quantitative studies, (Curran & Francis, 1996; Francis, 1986, 1995; Francis, 2002; Francis & Egan, 1993; Francis & Robbins, 2005; Gibson & Francis, 1989; Greer, 1993). The Francis scale of attitude has been used extensively in quantitative studies of students' attitudes to Christianity in both denominational and non-denominational schools. Francis's studies in Catholic schools have illuminated the religious differences of students within Catholic schools, for example Francis



(2002), Francis and Egan (1993). The studies of Francis and Egan (1993) highlighted that non-Catholic students in a Catholic school reflected a less sympathetic attitude to Christianity than the Catholic students. From a large-scale quantitative research study Francis (2002) concluded that there were significant differences in the 'moral and religious climate' between pupils in Catholic and non-denominational schools, and that there were four distinct categories of pupils attending Catholic schools; practising Catholics, sliding Catholics, lapsed Catholics and non-Catholics. He argued that the greatest threat to Catholic school community was not from non-Catholics, but from 'lapsed Catholics'. Although my research is situated within a qualitative framework, quantitative studies are invaluable in supporting and contextualising ethnographic research findings.

There have been qualitative research studies within Religious Education field into attitudes of children of faith. The Warwick Religious Education Project, a Religious Education curriculum development program, converted ethnographic source material into resources for use by students (Jackson & O' Grady, 2007). The Warwick project has made a major contribution to research in this area through for example, ethnographic research by Jackson and Nesbitt (1993) into the lives of Hindu children; Eleanor Nesbitt's research with Sikh children and in the field of intercultural education (2004b); and Ipgrave's (2001) research into dialogical approaches in the teaching of RE. These studies are not limited to the school setting, but the attitudes described in their studies are relevant in an examination of the attitudes of Catholic students in Catholic schools.

## **1.9 Brief overview of research studies**

From a summary of these studies it is important to note the paucity of empirical research in faith schools (Lawton & Cairns, 2005, p. 249) and Catholic schools (Grace, 2002, 2003, 2009a; McKinney, 2006, p. 113), and the lack of ethnographic research (O'Keefe & O'Keefe, 1996, p. 308). There is also a paucity of research of children's views (McKinney, 2006, p. 113). This is a failure to acknowledge that children do have a capacity to reflect on their own lives (see Chapter 4) and is an area that needs to be taken into consideration in my own research design.

The two main issues raised by these empirical studies that will be explored further in this small-scale ethnographic study are the issue of the Catholicity of the Catholic school and its members and the issue of social cohesion and the Catholic schools. The research studies have reflected evidence of the tension inherent in the connection between the Catholic school and the Catholic Church, some (Arthur 1995) lamenting the perceived dilution of the Catholicity. Some of the issues highlighted are: the changes being forced on schools through decreasing numbers of practising Catholic teachers and Catholic pupils, (Angus, 1998; Burgess, 1983; Egan, 1988; Murray, 1996); the conflict between the Church hierarchy's view of Catholic education for Catholic pupils and the level of Catholicity of members of the school community (Egan, 1988; Angus, 1988; Brothers, 1964), and the challenges of parental power and increased emphasis on academic success criteria (Grace, 2002; Arthur, 1995). The potential value of the Catholic schools contribution to community cohesion is considered in Breen

(2009) and Ipgrave's (2001) works, while Allen and West's (2009) research argued that the admissions policies of Catholic schools detract from community cohesion. The studies also highlighted the value of the 'sense of community' (Bryk et al, 1993) and the contribution that Catholic schools make to social capital (Coleman, 1987). Grace (2003) argued that these findings show that Catholic education at its best is:

providing religious, moral and social formation, which is respectful of the spiritual and intellectual autonomy of students, open to debate, dialogue and scepticism and sensitive to the responsibility of good citizenship and to the traditions of other faiths. (2003, p. 153)

The extent to which Catholic schools can remain distinctively Catholic with increasing number of non-Catholics and a weakening of the belief and practice of the Catholic members of staff will be explored in Chapter 11.

## **1.10 Conclusion**

This chapter has outlined some of the issues raised in the current debate about faith schools. It has described the development of the Catholic secondary school in England, the historical and philosophical basis for it, and the changes in the Catholic community it serves. The last section considered a sample of research studies in Catholic schools and with Catholic students, some relevant studies in other faith schools and their relevance to the main themes of this research. There is a need for empirical research into the Catholicity of the Catholic School and into the contribution the Catholic school makes to social cohesion. Such research is also important in the context of the wider debate on faith schools surrounding

the problem of the autonomy of the child and social cohesion. The next chapter will consider the understanding of religion that underpins this research.

## **Chapter 2: A sociological understanding of mainstream religion in twenty-first century Europe**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter aims to explore the sociological understanding of religion that underpins this study; it is based on a leading French sociologist Danièle Hervieu-Léger's (2000), understanding of religion in the twenty-first century. It is a view that acknowledges the continuing existence of a mainstream religious faith in some individuals' lives, although in a form not previously found in earlier centuries. Religion is not disappearing, just transforming or metamorphosing, as the memory of religious traditions is fragmenting. This understanding offers a fruitful way of analysing the perceptions of Catholicism found in a Catholic school, illuminating the way in which Catholic students approach the Catholic faith tradition and develop their own religious identity. The chapter begins with a brief review of the secularisation debate and section two explains the details of Hervieu-Léger's (2000) view of religion as a chain of memory. The next two sections examine the relevance of this theory for the Catholic Church in the transmission of the memory and for the individual believer in the reception of the memory of the tradition. The fifth section considers briefly the relevance of research in the field of congregational studies (Guest, et al., 2004) and Ammerman's (2007) research into 'everyday religion' which views religion as a 'lived experience' rather than a system of beliefs or individual spirituality. The final section considers the application of Hervieu-Léger's theories to empirical research.

## **2.2 The secularisation debate**

The concept of secularisation has dominated the sociology of religion for the last few decades, and has been much debated, although the decline in church attendance and decline in the role of religion in public life in Europe is well documented (Davie, 2007a). Secularisation has a variety of different theoretical bases ranging from the Freudian idea that religion was just a phase in the process of evolution, and Hume's view that it will disappear as humans become more rational. Wilson (1969, 2003) and Bruce (1996, 2003) have argued that society is becoming more secular and religion is becoming increasingly privatised and marginalised. Wilson attributes this, in part, to the loss of the close-knit community, Bruce to the processes of individualisation and pluralisation. Secularisation is a complex idea; Dobbelaere (1981, p. 11) argues that three different strands can be isolated, a) laicisation – decline in the significance of religion, b) religious change – changes in theology and the beliefs of individuals, and c) religious involvement – changes in relationships between individuals and religious organisations. Other scholars argue that secularisation is not inevitable, Stark and Finke's (2000) research in the USA leads them to argue that religious diversity leads to religious vitality (Ammerman, 2007; Beckford, 2003). Berger (1969) argued that the human search for meaning was an anthropological necessity (Beckford, 2003, p. 68) and that secularisation is not an inevitable consequence of modernisation (Davie, 2007a, p. 64). The difference in the situations of Europe and USA has led some, such as Martin (1991), to conclude that secularisation theory is only of particular relevance to western Europe (Davie, 2007a, p. 62).

In recent years, alternatives to secularisation theory have been considered. A decline in practice has not necessarily led to a decline in belief. Grace Davie, an eminent British sociologist, argued that people were ‘believing without belonging’ (1994, 2007a, p. 138) and that informal religious belief outside traditional organisations, do still exist. Davie’s thesis has been criticised: Bruce (2003) argued that religious beliefs are also in decline albeit a step behind the decline in practice; Beckford is concerned that the link with declining membership of voluntary organisations is not wholly valid and that Davie’s thesis distracts from the growth of evangelical and Pentecostal churches (Beckford, 2003, p. 55). Davie (2000) has further refined her thesis with the development of the concept of vicarious religion, an idea considered in more detail in Chapter 11. The secularisation debate is still alive, and Davie is not alone in arguing for the continuing existence of religion and developing an approach that offers a fruitful method of examining religious belief and practice in the twenty-first century.

### **2.3 Religion as a Chain of Memory**

This idea that religion is persisting albeit in different forms, what Beckford calls the metamorphosis of religion (Beckford, 2003, p. 55), is the focus of Danièle Hervieu-Léger’s (2000) theory of religion. A distinguished French sociologist of religion, she has made an original and important contribution to the debate about religion and modernity (Davie, 1999; Flanagan, 2001, p. 301). Danièle Hervieu-Léger (2000) argues religion is not disappearing, but undergoing a process of

transformation; that what we are experiencing is a decline in the religious institutions, de-institutionalisation, but not a decline in the religious.

Hervieu-Léger's definition of religion is crucial to an understanding of her argument. After a consideration of the traditional definitions of Marx, Durkheim and Weber, she adopts a variation of Séguy's (1952) definition of religion, which he developed from a detailed reading of Weber. For Séguy 'metaphorical religion is not a residue of past religion, but the formative apparatus of modern religion' (Hervieu-Léger, 2000, p. 68). He claims 'religious concepts are used metaphorically as a resource for coping with modernity' (Flanagan, 2001, p. 303). It is a definition, which acknowledges the changing nature of religious belief. However, Hervieu Léger (2000, p. 71) disagrees with Séguy's definition of modern religion as a loss of supernatural, suggesting that modern religion is a transformation, rather than a loss.

Religion can be defined with reference to believing, 'modernity has deconstructed the traditional systems of believing, but has not forsaken belief' (2000, p.74). Following Bourdieu, believing is defined as not being susceptible to verification, 'anything which is a product of "what appears to be self-evident in the experience of living" belongs to the sphere of believing' (2000 p.72). However, crucially religion is not just about belief or about an emotional experience.

There is no religion without the authority of a tradition being invoked  
(whether explicitly, half-explicitly or implicitly) in support of the act  
of believing. (2000, p.76)



Hervieu Léger bases this conclusion partly on research she undertook with Bernard Hervieu on forms of utopia envisaged and practised by neo rural communities. They noticed then that the groups invoked past witnesses, a 'tradition that was authoritative' to legitimise their beliefs (p.76). According to Misztal (2004, p. 68), Heelas (1996) notes similar findings when he argues that 'New Agers are inclined to go back to the past'.

The religious is a form of believing, which sees an all-absorbing commitment to a chain of belief; the act of believing becomes legitimised by reference to the authority of the tradition.

It is not the continuity in itself that matters, but the fact of its being the visible expression of a lineage which the believer expressly lays claim to and which confers membership of a spiritual community that gathers past, present and future believers. (2000, p.81)

This commitment functions as a means of social identification, through both incorporation into a believing community and through differentiation from those who do not belong to the chain.

[A] religion is an ideological, practical and symbolic system through which consciousness, both individual and collective, of belonging to a particular chain of belief is constituted, maintained, developed and controlled. (2000, p.82)

It consists of 'lineaments of belief' (Beckford, 2003, p. 57), and is an expression of believing, a memory of continuity, and a legitimising reference to authorised version of the memory or tradition (Hervieu-Léger, 2000, p. 97). The memory or tradition is crucial to Hervieu-Léger's understanding of religion.

In recent years memory has been one of the main discourses used in a variety of disciplines: history, anthropology and sociology. It has often been used to explain a group's past, but also to transform it into a reliable identity source for the group present (Misztal, 2004). Berliner (2005) argued that memory as a concept is being so widely used in so many different disciplines as to be meaningless. It is therefore important to clarify how Hervieu-Léger uses the concept of memory; she develops the concept from the ideas of Halbwachs (1952). In traditional societies collective memory was totally contained within the structures of society; there was no need to emphasise this link with past memories, as there was no threat to the chain of memory. In modern differentiated society, collective memory is subject to constant reconstruction. The present shapes the way we remember the past (Botros, 2006). Religious belief is the actualising of the past in the present; it is the present re-defining the past. It is this 'past which gives meaning to the present and contains the future into memory; it is anamnesis' (Hervieu-Léger, 2000, p. 125). Tradition is not set in stone, but develops through 'permanent reprocessing of data which a group or society receives from its past' (p.87). However, all tradition is not believing and all believing is not tradition. Halbwachs (1952) argues that the dynamic function of memory is engendered by society itself. There is a conflict between rational dogmatic memory and memory of a mystical nature; the former aims to achieve a unified religious meaning and protect the chain from disturbances caused by mystical meaning (Hervieu-Léger, 2000, p. 126). For Hervieu-Léger (2000, p. 127) this dialectic between emotive symbolic evocation and the rational body of belief is the central dynamic of all religions.

In modern society, collective memory is disintegrating as a consequence of two trends: firstly, expansion and homogenisation of memory, and secondly, the limitless fragmentation of individual and group memory (2000, p.129). Modern society is characterised by high mobility and remoteness of social relations, and uncertainty; but this has not removed individuals' or societies' need to believe; indeed the uncertainty has made the need stronger. A post-modern society is a society in which everything fragments; in which we are 'actors without a system, enclosed in their imagination and memory, adrift in a universe without fixed bearings' (2000, p.165). Yet Hervieu-Léger argues that human beings have a need to make the world intelligible. Modern society is not producing 'societies of memory' (Hervieu-Léger, 2000, p. 123); it is characterised rather by discontinuity and it is in this milieu that the individual seeks out voluntary communities, to gain a sense of belonging. Paradoxically the accelerated change found in modern society gives rise to more and more appeals to memory, tapping into a need to recover the past in imagination, to achieve collective and individual identity. As Nora (1989) has pointed out there are many areas of modern society where this reconstitution of memory is taking place, including the interest in genealogy, heritage, historical novels and pageants.

[In society] the deliberate choice of invoking the authority of a tradition, of becoming incorporated into a continuing lineage, constitutes one possible, post traditional way of constructing self-identity among others, all of which call upon an individual's affectivity and are fed on his or her search for community and his or her memories and longings. (2000, p. 165)

The attachment to the memory engenders a sense of belonging and has led to the spread of community based small memories and resulted in the pluralisation and problematisation of memory. Modern societies are destructive of some forms of religious life, such as regular attendance at Church, but do create their own need for religion (Davie, 2007a, p. 60).

Meštrović (1997) has outlined a challenging criticism concerning the use of the concept of memory. He holds that modern society is a post emotional society; Durkheim's notion of the sacred is no longer credible, but attempts are made through the celebration of artificial rituals to mechanically create this sense of sacred identity. 'Post emotional' memory cannot be authentic. Although Beckford (2003) is critical of Meštrović's ideas that emotion used to be real and direct in the past, he maintains that Catholics cannot 'still draw on a heritage of cultural memories handed down across the generations' (2003, p. 205). Meštrović's (1997) view that it is necessary to ascertain whether memories are authentic, recycled, or manufactured, becomes very pertinent when you consider Hervieu-Léger's description of the Roman Catholic Church's emotional mobilisation of its members (see Chapters 6 and 11). Meštrović's work on the politicisation of memory has relevance for the idea of religion as a chain of memory. His work refers to the use of memory in the Balkans; the emphasis was put on various aspects of memories, which suited the politics of those 'remembering' them. Carrette (2004) has applied Meštrović's views to the use or misuse of memory in the promotion of Celtic spirituality, which appeals to authentic Christian foundation. It is 'post emotional marketing of simple life, a past utopia' (Carrette, 2004, p. 283). The aspects remembered are very carefully selected, ignoring or

forgetting many aspects of Celtic spirituality tradition, such as the severity of the lifestyle, and the treatment of women. Carrette argues that 'religious traditions...are in the business of marketing memory and emotions' (p. 287) and it is not the past itself, but 'the control of the past for present concerns that is of importance' (Carrette, 2004, p. 285). This idea of who controls or manipulates the memory of the tradition is developed further in Chapter 11.

## **2.4 Catholicism: maintaining the memory**

Religious belief is seen thus to be persisting albeit in different forms and legitimising itself through connection to a chain of memory. If we accept this understanding of religion then the transmission of that chain of memory is crucial.

The survival of any society is conditional upon the regular and uninterrupted transmission of institutions and values from one generation to the next. (Hervieu-Léger, 1998, p. 213)

This continuity of memory is the foundation of their existence. There is a crisis of transmission; the chain of memory has become very fragile. The extent of this crisis of transmission is clear; Davie (2000) talks of precarious memory.

It is abundantly clear that the younger generations of Europe have effectively lost touch with the institutional churches in terms of anything approaching regular practice. (2000, p.188)

The notion of a shared language of belief no longer exists except in amongst children of active churchgoers or those involved in church youth movements (Davie 2000 p.181). Davie's findings of the changes in attitudes in young people (Davie, 1994, p. 123), show that significant groups of young people no longer

have any religious belief, but some are still 'believing' but looking elsewhere for their beliefs. Arweck and Nesbitt's (2010) research with mixed-faith families suggests that this crisis of transmission is not just within Christianity.

A major factor contributing to the crisis in transmission of the memory is the loss of authority of all religious institutions. A society where individual commitment takes precedence over recognition of traditional power calls into question the possibility of an authoritative system being able to impose itself on society (Hervieu-Léger, 2000, p. 167). The Catholic Church faces the problem of the de-institutionalisation of the religious and the flexible nature of believing. Believers view tradition in a different manner.

[N]ot as a sacred trust, but as an ethnic-cultural heritage, a fund of memory and reservoir of signs at the disposal of individuals. (2000 p.168)

For the Catholic Church the problem is that believers are assembling their own beliefs, from those who include the possibility of not believing, to those who see everything in their life as a sign of the religious (p. 169). The ability of the Catholic Church to control or regulate beliefs is thus called into question; the hierarchical structure comes under threat (Andersen, 2010; Hervieu-Léger, 2000, p. 172). The Roman Catholic Church is less and less capable of maintaining this chain of memory due to the decline in practice (Davie, 1999, p. 110); for example one of the ways it was able to maintain moral authority was through the Catholic sacrament of reconciliation (traditionally known as confession). With diminishing numbers attending reconciliation even amongst practicing Catholics, that avenue of transmission is lost. According to Enzo Pace (2007) this has led to a weakening

of the transmission of morals, deconsecration of the figure of the priest and detachment of various spheres of their life from the religious control of the Church (2007, p. 39).

The Catholic Church is thus losing not only its memory tradition, but also its authority. It is faced with possible conflict between believers who primarily belong to the community and those who seek authority in the message; cultural rationalisation – those who belong without believing and emotional mobilisation – those who believe without belonging (Hervieu-Léger, 2000, p. 174). Cram (2001, p. 167) drawing on Hervieu-Léger's ideas suggests that the Christian churches reaction to this problem has been to try to produce surety through 'return to orthodoxy', and 'authoritarian bureaucratic decision making' ignoring their social dislocation and increasing individualism. Hervieu-Léger (2000) argues that the Roman Catholic Church has reacted to this situation by reaffirming the centrality of the doctrinal authority of Rome, giving its message a prophetic character to compensate for the loss of authority. She questions whether despite the apparent openness of the Second Vatican Council, 'the deep structures of the Catholic body – implacable in its opposition to modernity – remain intact' (Davie, 1999, p. 107).

The Roman Catholic Church has tried to revive a consciousness of belief in the revival of pilgrimages for young people (Hervieu-Léger, 2000, p. 175) and through the visits of John Paul the Second to 'lieux de memoire' (Davie, 1999, p. 111). This can be seen as an attempt to create an emotional tie to the memory of the tradition; it is a manufacturing of memories aiming to induce all who participate to take on Catholic identity. Hervieu-Léger (2000, p. 175) herself is

doubtful of the success of this top down approach. Pace (2007) is more positive, he argues that the Catholic Church has begun to accept that it can no longer impose norms, but ‘they can construct a romantic sense of being a society, a collective identity’ (Pace, 2007, p. 44). However, Pace (2007 p.45) points out the role of Pope John-Paul the Second as a charismatic leader and media communicator, poses challenges for the future, with regards to re-investing of symbolic capital after his death.

## **2.5 Bricolage and Catholic identity**

For Hervieu-Leger (2000) the crisis of transmission can be seen as an ending, but it is also an opportunity for new forms of religion to emerge (Davie 2007a). The crisis of transmission within Catholicism and the challenge to the authority of the Catholic Church is relevant to the situation in Catholic secondary schools in England.

The problem of transmission ...is not primarily a problem of failure to adjust to the educational methods used to transmit body of knowledge.

It is structurally linked to the collapse of the framework of collective memory, which provides every individual with the possibility of a link between what comes before and after his or her actual experience.

(Hervieu-Léger, 2000, p. 130)

The young people do not lack knowledge, but the ability to organise information. For Hervieu-Léger as the development of collective memory disappears from modern society, the individual believer’s relationship with tradition has become voluntary, there is a ‘pick and mix’ attitude to beliefs and matters of devotions.



Hervieu-Léger develops the idea of religious 'bricolage', this is similar to Wuthrow's idea of patchwork religion (Berger, 2007, p. xii). Bricolage describes the individual's construction of their own religious identity, from the materials available to them. It is a 'playing of the code' (Hervieu-Léger, 1998, p. 217). The religious traditions are 'symbolic repositories of meaning' available for individuals to use and reuse in different ways (Hervieu-Léger, 2006, p. 2). A characteristic of modern society is not only that people 'practise bricolage', but that they also assert, a right to bricolage', producing for themselves their own relationship to the lineage (Hervieu-Léger, 1998, p. 217). Believers construct their own system of spirituality to make sense of their life (Leprince & Monin, 2002). Bricolage results in new small fragmented religious communities, which are evidence for both continuing religious belief and the breakdown of religious controls. There is a transformation of belief, as one form of religion collapses another emerges (Davie, 1999, p. 102).

Two models are outlined to explain this new development of the religious believer (Hervieu-Léger, 2001). The pilgrim follows an individual spiritual path, while the convert chooses to which religious family they wish to belong (Hervieu-Léger, 2006, p. 3). The image of the pilgrim suggests fluidity, moving away from the traditional markers of Catholic identity of time and space (Hervieu-Léger 2003, p. 282), such as the Catholic as a Sunday mass attending parishioner (Hervieu-Léger 2003, p. 280). However the 'pilgrim' is characterized by voluntary adherence to practice; religious belief is flexible and not rooted in one place, but 'personalised and deregulated'. Hervieu-Léger's 'convert' is an individual, who deliberately

chooses a religious identity, but, 'who like the pilgrim is engaged in the construction of the self' (Hanvey & Carroll, 2005).

For Hervieu-Léger the central issue is how individuals expectations relate to the demands of traditional religion (Flanagan, 2001, p. 304). She (1998) outlines four dimensions of religion: communal, ethical, cultural and emotional; there is a constant tension between these dimensions within any religion. The communal dimension focuses on the markers of the boundary of religious groups. It enables one 'to distinguish "those who are in" and "those who are out"' (Hervieu-Léger, 1998, p. 219). Within Catholicism this dimension is characterised by the sacrament of baptism and Sunday Mass attendance. The ethical dimension of religion is concerned with an individual's acceptance of the values of the religious tradition (1998, p.219). The ethical dimension of a religion can exist and often does exist separately from the other dimensions, for example Ammerman's (1997) definition of 'golden rule' Christians describes Christians who will often only subscribe to the ethical dimension of Christianity. The cultural dimension of religion includes the aspects of the heritage of the tradition, but does not necessarily involve any attachment to the beliefs and values of the religious tradition (Hervieu-Léger, 1998, p. 220).

The emotional dimension of religion involves an emotional experience associated with the transmission of tradition. Ninian Smart's (1971) interpretation of the experiential dimension of religion, focused on the individual response to the sacred; a religion by its very nature is concerned with the transcendental. Smart and Hervieu-Léger are approaching a study of religion from two different

directions (Cox, 2003). For Hervieu-Léger, it is an experience of the religious that gives a sense of 'us', an elementary experience of community that leads to a sense of identity with the community. The religious rite functions as a means of linking this emotional experience to 'the chain of memory' (Hervieu-Léger, 2000, p. 77). Without the emotional dimension, religion is reduced to a tradition without any active character. Nevertheless, for any institutional based religion, this emotional dimension is problematic, in that for the institution to maintain its traditions and boundaries, it needs to link this immediate emotional experience of the religious to its traditions. As Hervieu-Léger explains there is a continual tension between the emotional and cultural dimensions of a religion. The danger, for the institution, arises when the emotional dimension is unconnected as religion then becomes just lived in the moment, belief without tradition.

Young Catholics attach themselves to the Catholic tradition through a free combination of these four dimensions (1998, p. 223). This thesis will explore the variety of ways members of the Catholic school communities attach themselves to these dimensions, the communal (Chapters 6, 8, 11), the ethical (Chapters 7, 8, 11), the cultural (Chapters 8, 11) and the emotional (Chapters 6, 8, 11). This framework, suggests a diversity of Catholic identities and a fragmentation of the Catholic community. It is a potentially useful tool of analysis of Catholic young peoples understanding of their faith identity. Hervieu-Léger (1998) identified a further six distinct types of Catholic identity, which she terms aesthetic, emotional, humanist, humanitarian, patrimonial and political. It would be interesting to undertake further research with older students to see if they could be categorised using these six types, but for the purposes of my research I restricted

the analysis of Catholic identities to the identification of the four dimensions of religion.

## **2.6 Religion as ‘Everyday’ religion**

The understanding of religion outlined above, is coherent with Ammerman’s research into ‘everyday’ religion (2007); research on how ‘religion is experienced by living human beings in their actual everyday lives’ (Berger, 2007, p. vi). This strand of sociological research accepts the ‘reality of religious pluralism’ (2007, p. vii) and seeks to explain ‘the space between total commitment and total secularity’ (Ammerman, 2007, p. 219). Ammerman has recognised that religion persists in the twenty-first century and new ways of thinking about the relationship between religion and society need to be found. Her work on religion as an everyday phenomenon, views religion from the stance of the participants, non experts (Ammerman, 2007, p. 5). It recognizes the idea of choice and does not assume that those ‘who choose or who mix and match are inherently ‘less’ religious...’ but, remains concerned with the intersection of individual and institutional realities (2007, p.13). This strand of research does not ignore the mainstream denominations, Ammerman argues that religious traditions can remain powerful even when ‘twice removed’, supplying a kind of ‘cultural reservoir’; for the most part religion is viewed as ‘fragments and side plots’ (2007, p. 226). Researching religion from a ‘bottom up approach’ (Davie, 2007a, p. 251) is a fruitful method of explaining religion in increasingly secular and plural societies, for example Pace’s (2007, p. 37) research on the changing shape of Catholicism in Europe. Such an approach is needed within the educational

domain as ‘careful attention to the role of religion in everyday educational experiences is...rare’ (Ammerman, 2007, p. 233), and it is important to learn ‘what sort of religious practices create social boundaries and which build bridges’ (Ammerman, 2007, p. 231). There has been renewed interest in the field of congregational studies this area (Guest, et al., 2004, p. xiii) as it has become apparent that congregations have not disappeared in the face of increasing secularisation, but provide a fascinating insight into individuals lives in the space between ‘total commitment’ and ‘total secularity’. Stringer’s (2008) research into congregations in the field of anthropology and Davies and Guest’s (2007) research with Bishops and their families, explore the lives of those in mainstream denominations, examining how they construct their religious identity. This bottom up approach to the study of religion is relevant within this research study, where the focus is not on Catholicism as a system of belief, but on the everyday experiences of religious practice and belief in school as described by the young participants.

## **2.7 The application of Hervieu-Léger’s theory**

Hervieu-Léger’s detailed analysis has been recognised as an interesting approach to the understanding of religion in the twenty-first century. Grace Davie has found her work an important tool of analysis and maintains that Hervieu-Léger raises important questions for future research, (Davie, 1999, p. 113). She has explored the ideas of Hervieu- Léger analysing different aspects of memory of religion (2000). Hervieu- Léger (2006, p. 3) argues that Davie’s phrase ‘believing without belonging’ characterises the state of secularisation in Europe, but so does the

inversion of that phrase belonging without believing. Davie has outlined the concept of vicarious memory or religion, a small group preserving the memory for the majority (Davie, 2000, 2007b). Pace (2007, p. 45) argues this has become the role of the Catholic Church; it is acting as 'the safeguard of collective memory'. People need someone to hold the memory for them, to hold the Christian values for them or to be there for them in times of crisis. This view of memory has relevance to faith schools; Freund (2001) in her study of Catholic schools in Australia came to the conclusion that many non-practising Catholic parents want their child to attend a Catholic school, which holds to Catholic beliefs and values, even though the parents themselves do not actively maintain the memory.

The implication of Hervieu-Léger's theories for Catholic schools in England has been recognised by James Hanvey SJ and Tony Carroll SJ of the Heythrop Institute for Religion, in their publication 'On the Way to Life' commissioned by the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales (Hanvey & Carroll, 2005). This document is an attempt to outline the place of the Catholic faith tradition in a modern plural society. It acknowledges the relevance of much of what Hervieu-Léger has to say, and agrees that religion is undergoing some sort of 'dynamic transformation' citing David Lyon's (2000) view that 'Religious life in post modern times demands not only to be understood differently, but also to be lived differently' (Hanvey & Carroll, 2005, p. 30).

Bruce (2001) who does not accept that religion is persisting, has highlighted one of the flaws of Hervieu-Léger's theory, that there is a clear lack of empirical

research to support her claims. However some sociologists of religion have successfully applied her understanding of religion to empirical research (Andersen, 2010; Arweck & Nesbitt, 2010; Inglis, 2007). Arweck and Nesbitt (2010) applied her theories concerning the transmission of religion to their study of mixed-faith families in Britain. Inglis (2007) and Anderson (2010) have both applied her ideas to the development of Catholic identity in Ireland.

## **2.8 Conclusion**

Hervieu-Léger's theory of religion as a sense of belonging to a religious tradition, and the use of memory of tradition to construct a religious identity albeit a fragmented identity, provides a framework to view the lives of the young participants in Catholic secondary schools in England. The questions that it poses concerning the precariousness of memory and control of that memory are pertinent to this study. Catholic secondary schools exist in an increasingly secular and plural society; yet aim to transmit the Catholic faith tradition to a new generation of Catholics. The idea of religious bricolage and the fragmentation of the Catholic religious tradition is a useful means of exploring young Catholics attitude to religion, although a question to be addressed within this research is to what extent the young people involved in this study are active 'bricoleurs'. This chapter has examined a definition of religion, which acknowledges both the increasing secularity and the increasing plurality of modern society and yet recognises that religion continues as 'personal option and a means of individual identification' (Hervieu-Léger, 2006, p. 3). The next chapter explores a framework

to understand how the Catholic school functions in an increasingly secular and plural society, based on an understanding of social capital theory.



## **Chapter 3: Religion and social capital theory**

### **3.1 Introduction**

The previous chapter explored an understanding of religious identity that is characterised by an attachment to a memory of a tradition. A Catholic school community may establish its religious identity through connecting to that chain of memory, but it is also a community working together and linked to the wider community of the Catholic Church and secular society. The sociological theory of social capital, which focuses on the social ties created by individuals and communities, is a useful method to analyse how a Catholic school community is cohesive both internally and with the wider society. This chapter will begin with an examination of the relevant aspects of development of the social capital concept considering the work of Bourdieu, Coleman, and Putnam. The second section will evaluate the concepts of bonding and bridging capital, while the third examines different interpretations of religious and spiritual capital. The final section reviews the application of these concepts in relevant empirical research studies.

### **3.2 The development of the concept of social capital**

Social capital is a much-contested concept; it has been defined and debated in a variety of disciplines, such as sociology, politics, health and education. The first mention of the term social capital can be found in the writings of Lyda J. Hanifan in 1916 (Woolcock & Narayan, 2000, p. 228), but Farr (2004, p. 19) traces it further back to the American philosopher Dewey's reference to learning how to

unlock the ‘wealth of social capital’ (Baker & Miles-Watson, 2007, p. 7). In recent years, social capital theory has been seen as a way of contributing to ‘better educational attainment, lower crime levels, improved health, more active citizenship, better functioning labour markets, and higher economic growth’ (Performance and Innovation Unit, 2002). It addresses an issue of community that has always interested sociologists (Farr, 2004, p. 10) and builds on the value of social relationships that can be traced back to Durkheim’s notion of ‘group life as antidote to anomie’ (Portes, 1998, p. 2). However, a major theoretical criticism is that of lack of clarity; there is no one accepted definition (Fukuyama, 1999; McGonigal, et al., 2007; Morrow, 1999; Portes, 1998; Woolcock & Narayan, 2000, p. 239). However, there is some consensus in the literature on a definition of social capital as ‘the ability of actors to secure benefits by virtue of membership in social networks or other social structures’ (Portes, 1998, p. 6). The main theme is that,

[R]elationships *matter*. By making connections with one another, and keeping them going over time, people are able to work together to achieve things that they either could not achieve by themselves, or could only achieve with great difficulty. (Field, 2008, p. 1)

The next section will consider the contribution of Bourdieu, Coleman and Putnam to the development of the concept of social capital.

### **3.3 The contribution of Bourdieu, Coleman and Putnam**

Pierre Bourdieu was an influential post-war French sociologist (Jenkins, 2002) who in the 1960s and 1970s, developed an understanding of culture as a dynamic,

creative, yet structured phenomenon (Schuller, Baron, & Field, 2000). He claimed that power relationships in society such as class distinctions, were not just based on accumulation of economic wealth, but on accumulation of cultural and social capital (Bourdieu, 1986). Influenced by a Marxian view of society, his work reflects a focus on 'the hierarchical structure of social relationships rather than the role of the individual' (Schuller, et al., 2000, p. 5). Crucial to this understanding is the concept of 'habitus', 'a system of more or less well assimilated and more or less transposable schemes of thought' (Bourdieu, Chamboredon, Passeron, & Krais, 1991, p. 5). Bourdieu's understanding of habitus is that it is developed unconsciously. It is 'socialised subjectivity' (Baker & Miles-Watson, 2008, p. 453), based on the idea of socialisation of an individual as opposed to rational choice theory (Verter, 2003). Habitus is not immutable, it can mutate; it is a product of a community's history, that in time changes and can shape new histories (Baker & Miles-Watson, 2008, p. 453). In 'Reproduction' (1977) Bourdieu describes education as a 'process of inculcation' aimed at producing 'habitus' (Jenkins, 2002, p. 106).

Although Bourdieu's analysis of the concept of social capital is the 'most theoretically refined' (Portes, 1998, p. 3), it is only in his essay on the Forms of Capital (1986), that Bourdieu clarifies fully his understanding of social capital. He defines it as:

The aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to the possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition which provides

each of its members with the backing of collectively owned capital.

(Bourdieu 1986, p.51)

Social networks are constructed, as individuals establish group relations (Portes, 1998, p. 3). Social capital is thus the social relationships, which allow 'individuals access to resources possessed by their association and the quality of those resources' (Portes, 1998, p. 4).

Whereas for Bourdieu the focus is on socialisation, i.e. the habitus, Coleman an American sociologist, defined social capital in functional terms (1988). It is primarily a way of understanding the relationship between education, achievement, and social inequality (Schuller, et al., 2000, p. 6). Coleman explains that social capital 'inheres in the structure of relations between actors' (1988, p. 98) and functions as a resource that individuals can use to realise their potential. The reason for this is that 'groups with extensive trustworthiness and trust accomplish more than one without' (1988, p. 101). Social capital is to be found in three forms (1988, p. 119): firstly, in obligations and expectations, which depend on trustworthiness of environment and are a form of reciprocity, but where the capital invested will not necessarily benefit a particular individual; secondly, in the capacity of information to flow through the social structure (1988, p. 104); and, thirdly, in the presence of norms accompanied by effective sanctions (1988, pp. 104-105, 1994, p. 310).

Three main factors affect creation and destruction of social capital: closure, a stable environment and religious ideology. Closure which is a valuable development in the debate (Portes, 1998, p. 6), encourages the creation of social

capital by allowing the development of effective norms and reputations (J. Coleman, 1988, p. 107). This can be positive, encouraging an expectation of high achievement, for example resulting in high attainment in Catholic schools (McGonigal, et al., 2007, p. 84), or negative, limiting a person's freedom (Portes, 1998, p. 15). Secondly, stable environments are needed as social capital is fragile and needs to be maintained and will depreciate if not renewed over time (J. Coleman, 1994, p. 321). It differs from other forms of capital.

The actor or actors who generate social capital ordinarily capture only a small part of its benefits, a fact that leads to under investment in capital. (J. Coleman, 1988, p. 118)

Thus, in areas of high mobility individuals are unlikely to invest capital where they are unlikely to reap any future benefits. The third factor highlighted by Coleman (1994, p. 321) relevant for this research is ideology, as religious beliefs can encourage the creation of social capital. Coleman (1988) places great value on family, community, and neighbourhood networks.

Social capital is of value because it is 'the set of resources ...that are useful for the cognitive or social development of the child' (J. Coleman, 1994, p. 300). Family relations are more important than the human capital possessed by the parents (J. Coleman, 1988, p. 110) as the time parents invest in a child's education is more effective than the parental education attainment (Greeley, 1997). Coleman laments the disappearance of informal family and community structures that provide this type of social capital (Portes, 1998, p. 6). The community is thus 'a social resource that compensates for family deficiencies' (J. Coleman & Hoffer, 1987, p. 148). Coleman has been criticised for expanding the term social capital

and obscuring the distinction between the resources themselves and the ability to obtain them by virtue of membership in different social structures; a distinction that is explicit in Bourdieu (Portes, 1998, p. 6).

Coleman (1987) applied and developed the concept of social capital in his study of Catholic High schools in the USA, where he examines the question of the low drop out rate in Catholic schools. He argued that Catholic High schools possess more social capital than public schools, as the former are created by networks of shared values, strong community support networks, and a high degree of closure of the networks (J. Coleman & Hoffer, 1987, p. 148). In Catholic schools there is inter generational closure (J. Coleman, 1988, p. 114) the social capital inherent in the Catholic Church provides a cross generational link, the capital of the adult community can be transferred to the children (Baker & Miles-Watson, 2007, p. 12). Further research has found that a high-level of parent activity and lower levels of residential mobility, also contributed to the creation of social capital (Bryk, et al., 1993). Greeley (1997) argues that Bryk's findings show that the extra net effectiveness of Catholic schools can be attributed to tighter community structures. The implication that Catholic schools are effective generators of social capital is very relevant for this research. It is an argument that will be explored in Chapter 12.

The concept of social capital has been further developed, refined, and popularised by Robert Putnam (1995). Much of the interest in the concept of social capital in last decade has been generated by Putnam's analysis and popularising of the concept in his book 'Bowling Alone' (2000). Like Coleman, Putnam has a

functional as opposed to a substantive definition of social capital. They both focus on the community, the civic life, rather than on the individual. Putnam's prime focus is on civic participation and political theory rather than education. He defines social capital as 'features of social life-networks, norms and trust, that enable participants to act together more effectively to pursue shared objectives' (Putnam, 2000, p. 56) and shifts the emphasis from trust to reciprocity (Schuller, et al., 2000, p. 11).

However, the theoretical basis of Putnam's analysis of the concept is often not clear (Furbey, et al., 2006, p. 6; Portes, 1998, p. 2) and his application of the concept to structure and civic level needs much more theoretical refinement (M. Leonard, 2004, p. 942). The circularity of his argument has been highlighted; it often appears that social capital is simultaneously cause and effect (Portes, 1998, p. 21; Schuller, et al., 2000, p. 29). Putnam's understanding of social capital has been criticized for its links with the political philosophy of 'moral communitarianism' (Levitas 1998 cited in Furbey, et al., 2006, p. 6). Although Greeley (1997) argues that for Coleman social capital is neutral, insofar as it is not just a case of amassing social capital, both Coleman and Putnam do have a very positive, optimistic view of social capital, suggesting that high levels of social capital can compensate for lack of economic capital. As their critics point out, social capital is not a cure-all; it has negative as well as positive affects (Taylor, 2000, p. 1027), and can result in exclusion of outsiders, excessive claims on members, restriction of individual freedom and downward leveling norms (Portes, 1998, p. 15; Woolcock & Narayan, 2000, p. 229).

Putnam's and Coleman's work has also been criticised as having an unacknowledged class and gender bias (Catts & Ozga, 2005; M. Leonard, 2004, p. 930; Morrow, 1999). Putnam's concern with participation in voluntary associations is defining middle class activity rather than working class (Boggs, 2001, p. 284). The social capital that Putnam and Coleman value is often dependent on the input of the unpaid work of women (Arneil, 2006, p. 6). An analysis of the creation and possession of social capital focuses on the leaders of the community and ignores the voices of women and young people. Researchers and 'a significant proportion of faith communities and organisations fail to listen to young people and women within their number' (Catts & Ozga, 2005; Portes, 1998, p. 2). This is a valid criticism, which will need to be addressed in this research study.

### **3.4 An evaluation of bonding and bridging Capital**

Taking account of the criticism of his work on social capital, a valuable contribution that Putnam has made is the development of the concept of bonding and bridging capital. This focuses on the function of social capital as bonding capital, creating the 'glue' which bonds together communities or bridging capital, generating 'WD40' that creates bridges with other communities (Putnam, Feldstein, & Cohen, 2003). Bonding and bridging capital is not a new concept, it has been traced back to Granovetter's (1973) explanation of weak and strong ties; weak ties being bridging capital, strong ties bonding capital (Field, 2008, p. 78; Furbey, et al., 2006, p. 52).



[Bonding Capital is] social ties, obligations and trust among people who are 'alike' (by virtue of gender, or ethnicity, or social background or any other dimension); The presence of bonding does not describe the strength of ties or the absence of ties to people outside a 'bonded' group. Rather, it refers only to the degree of homogeneity in a particular network. (Healy, 2005)

This could be seen just as new language for an old debate, re-using ideas of trust, community, networks and reciprocity (M. Leonard, 2004) . However, Furbey et al (2006, p. 6) argue that bonding capital is more than just a reworking of the concept of community, it is a resource based in the relationships between participants, which can be both beneficial and negative for members of the community. Another interpretation is that bonding capital suggests high walls that exclude others, while bridging capital is more likely to foster inclusion (Schuller, et al., 2000, p. 10). Bridging capital is 'connections between people who have less in common, but may have overlapping interests' with communities outside the immediate group (Gilchrist, 2004, p. 12). Woolcock (2000) identified a third form, linking capital, which concerns relations between people of differential power levels. Bonding capital enables a community to develop a collective identity, and bridging capital enables members of the groups to connect with wider society (Guest, 2010, p. 185).

It is important to explore the relationship between bonding and bridging capital, as there is some dispute over whether high bonding capital or high bridging capital is more advantageous for the civil society. For Coleman the emphasis is put on the value of bonding capital, on the dense networks (Portes, 1998, p. 12).

However, Burt (2001) argues for the importance of structural holes that facilitate individual mobility. Someone with a high level of bridging capital, that is holes in the networks that allow them to make links with other networks, has advantages over someone with a dense network of ties, as the person with high bridging capital has access to a wider variety of social capital and greater access to information. For Burt dense networks are advantageous in family situations, but holes that are bridging capital enable people to ‘get on’ in the workplace. Bridging capital is important for ‘managing diversity and maintaining community cohesion’ (Gilchrist, 2004). High bonding and low bridging leads to a closed community, as such systems ‘become stagnant because they are unable to adapt’ (Gilchrist 1999 cited in Taylor, 2000, p. 1032). Research in the UK (Smith 2003, Baker and Skinner 2006) suggests that some faith groups develop bonding capital at the expense of co-operation with wider society (Baker & Miles-Watson, 2007, p. 16). In a low bonding and low bridging community, the individual is isolated, while in a low bonding and high bridging community, there is anomie and no ‘sense of community’ (Halpern, 2005, p. 21). The ideal is then both high bonding and high bridging namely, a variety of types of social capital, which will result in a mature community. High bonding relationships can allow high bridging relationships to develop (Furbey, et al., 2006); this idea is further reflected on in Chapter 12. For example research has shown that those Turkish immigrants in the Netherlands, who are most actively involved in mainstream Dutch society are the most likely to be those most active in their own community (Putnam, 2004; Van Craen, Vancluysen, & Ackaert, 2008).

Madeleine Leonard (2004, p. 937) argues that Putnam's understanding of bonding and bridging capital is too simplistic, in particular the idea of the benefit for the community of moving from bonding to bridging capital. Her research in West Belfast highlighted the inequalities within the bonded community, and that the development of bridging capital benefits particular individuals rather than the community (M. Leonard, 2004). This needs to be explored further, for example within faith communities where 'bridging and linking is undertaken by quite a small minority' (Furbey, et al., 2006, p. 50). This may separate them from the rest of their faith community, rather than developing bridging capital in the whole community. Adler and Kwon (2002) also argue that the concepts of bonding and bridging capital need to be refined. They therefore devised three components of social capital, namely, opportunity, motivation, and ability, and argued that even when the first two components are present the ability might be lacking. Weisinger and Salipante's (2005) research reinforced this finding; they argue that the reason that bridging capital in voluntary associations was not created was 'insufficient history of shared destiny, and insufficient interpersonal know how' and 'there was often 'insufficient interpersonal skill...to sustain [it]' (2005, p.44). They concluded that 'bonding social capital outweighs bridging social capital in voluntary associational activities' (2005, p. 46). Therefore, in a consideration of the creation of bonding and bridging capital a key factor to be examined is the ability of a community to create capital, which is separate from the provision of opportunities and presence of motivation to create capital.

### **3.5 Spiritual and religious capital**

A relevant criticism for an application of the concept of social capital is that it is too limiting for a study of religion or faith traditions as it ignores the transcendental nature of religion. Research has shown a strong link between religion and development of social capital (Unruh & Sider, 2005) and in recent years there has been the development of associated concepts such as 'spiritual', and 'religious' capital. Religious capital has been defined as social capital generated through religious means (Smidt, 2003). However, religious or spiritual capital is more than just social capital generated through religious means, such a definition assumes too much, and it ignores many other aspects of religion. Religion is more than just the community, a network of friends worshipping together. It is multi-dimensional and it includes a theological framework. For many individuals it involves too a relationship with the supernatural and a relationship with the memory of the tradition of the community. John A. Coleman SJ (2003) points out that social capital is an economic leveling metaphor (2003, p.45), which ignores the differences between religions and also the difference between religions and other generators of social capital. Religions draw on sources not available to other generators of social capital such as belief in the divine, and in salvation, rewards in the next life.

Christians do not live a Christian life to produce social capital, but it appears that increased social capital is a long-term secondary consequence of Christian life. (Browning et al 1997 cited in J.A. Coleman 2003, p.44)

Certainly, the terms spiritual and religious capital need to be clearly defined and explained.

[Religious capital is] skills and experiences specific to one's religion, including religious knowledge, familiarity with church ritual and doctrine, and friendships with fellow worshippers. (Iannaccone [1990] cited in Finke, 2003)

Stark and Finke (2000, p. 120) revised this definition to 'religious capital consists of the degree of mastery of and attachment to a particular religious culture'. They argue that the higher the level of religious capital the higher the level of attachment to the religious community. This definition of religious capital implies a fixed orthodoxy, a mastering of a set version (Guest, 2010, p. 197).

Spiritual capital also appears to have multiple definitions.

[It is] a sub-species of social capital, referring to power, influence, knowledge, and dispositions created by participation in a particular religious tradition. (Berger & Hefner, 2003, p. 3)

For Woodberry (2003) spiritual capital is distinct from social capital because of the stress on relationship to God. He argues that the differences between those who attend church services for social reasons (extrinsically religious), and those who attend for religious reasons (intrinsically religious), suggest that spiritual capital is more than just social capital in a religious setting.

Baker and Skinner (2006) used both terms, namely spiritual capital and religious capital in their research into Manchester churches and church-based projects engaged with civil society. They make a distinction between spiritual capital, as

the 'why', the motivating basis of faith, 'belief and values' and religious capital, as the 'what'; the concrete actions and resources that faith communities contribute as a direct result of their spiritual capital. Spiritual capital is the motivation for the individual and religious capital is the action that results from that motivation. These can link to each other and produce a virtuous, mutually reinforcing cycle of capitals (Baker & Miles-Watson, 2008). Baker and Miles-Watson further developed the concept of secular spiritual capital (2008, p. 446), which may interact with social capital to produce virtuous cycles of capital (2008, p.457). They acknowledge moreover Crossman's (2003) concerns that secular spiritual capital could be seen as a challenge to religious viewpoints and a form of cultural imperialism, but they regard secular spiritual capital as being of value as a bridging term (p.43), in the space between religious commitment and secularism.

Verter (2003) aimed to clarify the definition of religious and spiritual capital, working with Bourdieu's understanding of social capital. Bourdieu interprets religion in the light of the hierarchical structure of the Catholic Church. In this interpretation religious agency is limited to the professionals, and there is no place for the laity as actors, they are 'dispossessed of the instruments of symbolic production' (Verter, 2003, p. 156). This view, whereby the laity is indoctrinated into a particular habitus is outdated (Hervieu-Léger, 2000, p. 111; Verter, 2003, p. 158). In contrast, Hervieu-Léger's understanding of religion is dependent on the idea of the individual as actor, not as passive receiver of the religious tradition. In Bourdieu's work, it often appears to be 'a world where behaviour has its causes, but actors are not allowed their reasons' (Jenkins, 2002, p. 97).

Bourdieu defines religious capital as referring to religious symbolic systems, and religious competences (Verter, 2003, p. 158). Religious capital is created in hierarchical institutions; its value is fixed by ‘the gold standard of the tradition’ (2003, p.158). For Verter spiritual capital is a derivation of cultural capital. It is visible in three states: in the embodied state in the knowledge of an individual, in the objectified state in the use of ideas, and in the institutionalised state in the power of churches. It is a more fluid, liquid resource (Guest, 2010, p. 192) than religious capital, which is fixed by tradition, created and possessed by the hierarchy. Guest (2010) argues that this understanding of spiritual capital is a useful analytical tool as it highlights issues of power inequality. It facilitates an analysis of religious identity, and offers a theoretical way into analysis of non-institutionalised religion (Guest, 2010, p. 197). This more fluid definition of spiritual capital does not result in meaninglessness. Rather

[ideas are] shaped by the traditions out of which they emerged,  
traditions that still steer their course mould their practical expression  
and infuse the way in which they are affirmed, silenced or challenged.  
(Guest 2010, p.198)

It is important to stress that this definition of spiritual capital is not exploring spirituality, as it is not analysing the individual’s relationship with God. The definition retains the emphasis on the structures of relationships, the networks, rather than the individual. It also coheres with Hervieu-Léger’s definition of religion and her understanding of the individual’s role in a construction of his or her religious identity. Spiritual and religious capital can develop either as bonding or as bridging capital, namely as a resource that binds together, or as one that develops bridges to other communities (see further discussion in Chapter 11).

### **3.6 The application of social capital theory in recent research**

The connection between religious affiliation and the generation of bonding and bridging capital has been well documented. Several research studies in the USA (Smidt, 2003) have shown that religious congregations are good generators of social capital; they are spaces where people can be accepted and start to make connections. Research has revealed denominational differences in the generation of social capital, Verba, Schlozman and Brady (1995) in the USA, argued that churches with a congregationally-based ecclesiastic structure generate more social capital than hierarchically based ones, such as the Roman Catholic Church (1995, p. 247). Bane's (2005) findings suggested that the strong emphasis on Catholic social teaching after the Second Vatican Council has not resulted in more American Catholics being more active in civic life. In the UK, Burton and Ineson (2003, p. 158) found that although the Roman Catholic church generated as many volunteers as other churches, the voluntary work was most likely to be solely within Catholic voluntary organisations. John A. Coleman SJ. (2003, p. 35) argues that the differences are not caused by denominational differences but by structural ones as churches with a vertical structure do have less ability to generate social capital. Research in the USA has found that a hierarchical structure that encourages involvement can generate social capital (2003 p. 68). It is important to explore whether these findings, which point to Roman Catholic congregations producing less bridging capital than other denominations, are also valid within Roman Catholic schools.



Research into Catholic schools in the USA (Coleman 1987 and Bryk et al 1993) has tended to focus on the development of bonding capital. In the UK, research has focused on social capital and the high levels of achievement attained in Catholic schools (Morris, 2005). Grace's study of development of spiritual capital in the leaders in Catholic schools highlights the fact that it appears to be a declining asset and that there is little evidence that this problem is being addressed (2003, p. 237). John Annette (2005) raised an interesting issue concerning the faith school and the development of bonding and bridging capital,

Is it the case that claims made for faith schools are largely based on their functional contribution to bonding social capital in their communities...If so to what extent will faith schools also provide bridging social capital and wider community cohesion? (2005, p. 198)

The empirical research in faith schools and bridging capital has tended to focus on the schools' contribution to social cohesion, and on barriers to developing bridging capital, for example the role of the admissions policy (Allen & West, 2009), (see further discussion Chapter 12).

One of the major concerns in the application of social capital theories to empirical studies is that they are not easily measurable, (Fukuyama, 1999; Greeley, 1997; McGonigal, et al., 2007; Woolcock & Narayan, 2000). The concept of social capital by its very nature is fragile, fluid, constantly changing. Measurement is not helped by the lack of a clear accepted definition of the concept, and the problem that in many studies the cause and effect of social capital appeared to be confused. There are added difficulties in measuring social capital in schools as most measurement tools that have been developed have focused on adults' voting

habits, or membership of associations (Catts & Ozga, 2005). Children's active role in contributing to social capital as opposed to being passive recipients of the parents capital, has not been explored in great detail (M. Leonard, 2005; Morrow, 1999). However, children should be viewed as 'social actors who shape and influence their own environments' (Morrow, 1999, p. 757), and this view will be reflected in the approach taken in my research. This study will not create or use a measurement tool, to measure how substantial bonding or bridging a Catholic school community is. Nevertheless, use of the concepts of bonding and bridging capital will illuminate important aspects of the Catholic school community in England (see further Chapter 12). The concerns of measurement and the view of children as active agents are developed further in the next two chapters.

Despite the many criticisms that can be leveled at the application of the concept of social capital, the concepts of bonding and bridging capital are a useful analytical tool, when exploring religion in the twenty-first century. Religion is no longer fixed in time or place, but is focused in networks created by individuals throughout their lifetime.

Putnam's "bonding and bridging" forms of social capital may provide one way of analysing twenty-first century religious beliefs, highlighting as they do complex ways in which reciprocal relations reinforce collective boundaries and generate fresh interactive networks both of which may provide a context of exchange for emerging forms of spiritual capital. (Guest, 2010, p. 190)

The value of the concept of bonding capital in educational research is that it enables the researcher to analyse aspects of the community structure of a school,

while bridging capital enables the researcher to explore issues of social cohesion. However, this study with its focus on religion will exclude much of the research undertaken into bridging capital and political participation.

### **3.7 Conclusion**

This chapter has outlined the development of the concept of social capital through the work of Bourdieu, Coleman and Putnam. It has examined the sub-categories of bonding and bridging capital, and religious and spiritual capital and evaluated some of the uses of these concepts in recent research. Chapter 11 will consider how the concepts of religious and spiritual capital can be applied to the Catholic secondary school, while Chapter 12 will explore the relevance of the concepts of bonding and bridging capital in the Catholic secondary school. This chapter has explored an interesting framework to analyse the data generated within an ethnographic study in a Catholic school. The next chapter will examine the methodological basis of this study.

## **Chapter 4: Methodology: ethnography in school**

### **4.1 Introduction**

Methodology is ‘the fundamental regulative principles which underlie any discipline’ (Seale, 2004, p. 8). Thus, it is important in this chapter to set out the ontological and epistemological frameworks within which this research is set as, once established, these paradigms affect the choice of research method. The second section of this chapter explores the value of the ethnographical case study as an appropriate method of research. The third section of this chapter will examine issues of reflexivity and the insider/outsider debate, and lastly, consider the challenges of research with young people.

### **4.2 Ontology, epistemology and subtle realism**

All research makes assumptions about the nature of reality – ontology, and ways in which we can know that reality – epistemology. The understanding of how we know what is, underpins any research method (Scott, 2005, p. 633). It is therefore necessary to set out the ontological and epistemological assumptions behind this research. There are a variety of possible assumptions; naïve realism (Robson, 2002, p. 29) assumes an external reality, which can be reached through sifting layers of interpretation. This is a view no longer accepted within the social sciences (Bryman, 2004, p. 12; Merriam, 1988, p. 39). The development of the view that reality is constructed, not discovered (J. Smith & Hodkinson, 2002, p. 292), leads to post modern anti-realism which assumes no underlying common reality (Hammersley, 1992). The philosopher Wittgenstein (1953) argued that

language determines our construct of reality, meaning being found within each 'language game' (Hammersley, 1992, p. 46). For the anti-realist 'any one account of reality cannot be privileged over any other' (Scott & Morrison, 2006, p. 194). The drawback is that, if all knowledge is equally valid; research becomes meaningless, as any research is just producing another version of the social world (Hammersley, 1992, p. 49).

However, there is a third way, which seeks to avoid the traps of both naïve realism and radical anti-realism. 'Subtle realism' (Hammersley, 1992) is the idea that research can be seen to represent reality, not a reality to which anyone has direct access, but one dependent on cultural assumptions. It has three main characteristics; knowledge is 'beliefs about whose validity we are reasonably confident'; phenomena are 'independent of our claims about them'; and reality is independent of 'the claims social researchers make about it' (Hammersley, 1992, pp. 49-50). Social research should aim to represent reality, which means that, 'there can be multiple, non-contradictory and valid descriptions and explanations of the same phenomena' (Hammersley, 1992, p. 50). Subtle realism is distinct from critical realism, where the aim of research is not just to interpret the world, but to change it, to facilitate emancipation and freedom (L. Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000, p. 29).

Critical realism has two major flaws, it assumes the Marxist view that there is a reality, a truth to be revealed, and it 'neglects the complex character of practice and its irreducibility to ideals and theories' (Hammersley, 1992, p. 119). The value of critical realism is that it highlights the issue of power and control of

knowledge, although, as knowledge is not ‘entirely shaped by power’, it maybe distorted or misrepresented (Jackson, 2008a, p. 18). When researching any religious tradition, it is important to consider who is controlling and defining the knowledge, and who is being denied access to control, and one must be aware of those voices that are not usually visible or heard, for example those of women and children (Jackson, 1999, pp. 55-57).

Subtle realism was selected as the epistemological understanding most appropriate for this research, accepting as it does that reality can only be accessed as a social construct, while not denying that there is a reality to be accessed (Seale [1999] cited in O' Reilly, 2005, p. 55). Subtle realism accepts that social research investigates independently knowable phenomena but, unlike naïve realism, it does not accept that there is direct access to phenomena. It shares with anti-realism recognition that all knowledge is based on assumptions and human constructions, however it does not accept that all is relative (Hammersley, 1992, p. 52). Accepting knowledge is constructed is saying no more than knowledge or concepts such as religion are social constructs, ‘in so much as meanings have changed over time, [vary] in different cultural situations and [have] never been universally agreed’ (Jackson, 2008a, p. 20).

### **4.3 Ethnographic research**

The research paradigm, which best fits this understanding and knowledge of reality, is that of ethnography. Although, according to the pioneering anthropologist, Bronislaw Malinowski (1884-1942), the goal of ethnography was,

‘to grasp the native’s point of view, his relation to life, to realise his vision of the world’ (Gillespie, 1992, p. 39), ethnography has moved on from this naïve idea of a reproduction of reality.

[The aim is] not to capture primitive facts in faraway places and carry them home like a mask, but rather to reduce puzzlement and discover the informal logic of actual life. (Geertz, 1973, p. 16)

Geertz’s understanding has contributed much to the development of ethnography with the focus on ‘thick descriptions’, which are ‘an integration of meaning and context at a textual level’ (Østberg 2003b, p. 23). Thick description involves describing the action in its context, and being conscious of levels of interpretation in the data (Nesbitt, 2002, p. 138), and aims not for a reproduction of reality, but a representation. The very fact that the researcher has to make notes changes or enhances the perception of the reality, but also constrains the reality, as it is only what is perceived that can be noted. The aim of ethnography for Geertz is to grasp concepts that for another people are experience-near, and place them in experience-distant theories. The role of the ethnographer is to analyse the web of ‘cultural structures, knowledge and meaning’ (Seale, 2004, p. 227). An understanding of others comes from the ability to construe their modes of expression – their symbolic systems. Geertz’s emphasis on the link with theory is important.

[There should be] a continuous dialectical tacking between the most local of detail and the most global of global structures in such a way as to bring them into simultaneous view. (Geertz, 1999, p. 61)

As Geertz points out, this is Dilthey’s hermeneutic circle, a continual movement from the particular to the theoretical. My research aims to reflect Geertz’s

emphasis on ‘thick description’, within the limits of educational research. Within the framework of this research young people are reflecting on issues that they might not otherwise view as relevant or important in their lives. To some extent their ability to articulate and reflect in any depth on these issues is limited. Their responses may sometimes appear superficial, but even such ‘thin’ descriptions provide insights into young people’s views and the extent to which they reflect and value ideas such as Catholic identity. However, ‘thick description’ can be created by placing the young peoples’ responses in context, cross-referencing with other interviewees responses, participant observations, and an analysis of documents.

Geertz’s work has been criticised for a lack of awareness of the construction of the ethnography and of the ‘contested, temporal and emergent’ nature of the culture. Cultures are dynamic they do not ‘hold still for their portraits’ (Clifford, 1986, p. 10). Clifford’s (1986) work has raised an awareness of the variety of ‘voices’ within the ethnographic account, ethnography has moved from observation to the writer’s voice, and from seeing the participants as informants, to now ensuring all voices are heard. The importance of the role of researcher in constructing or writing the ethnography is highlighted. The audience for the written account becomes important. As soon as field notes are written, interviews recorded, something new is created ‘a sociological fiction’ (Hirschauer, 2006, p. 420). Clifford argues that ethnography, ‘does not deal with ephemeral events, but with pre-formulated discourses, with the participants’ self- description’ (Hirschauer, 2006, p. 417). Ethnographers work from notes and recordings, which cannot be contested by the participants and they use these notes to construct the



final written account. To follow this to its logical conclusion would result in ethnographies, which are only works of fiction with tenuous links to reality. However, ethnographies do have value, when they are constrained by the perception of reality of the participants and researcher and when the method employed ensures all voices are heard.

#### **4.4 The value of the ethnographic case study**

For ethnography to have validity as a research method, it needs to establish a clear framework for the research, and ensure research methods are clear and robust. The case study research method functions well within an ethnographic framework. In an educational setting the ethnographic case study has the advantage of enabling an holistic analysis of complex social situations (Denscombe, 2007, p. 45). A case study is like a snapshot image of a place, group, or individual, where 'the general objective is to develop as full an understanding of that case as possible' (K. Punch, 2005, p. 144) . It is about the process rather than the outcomes, discovery rather than confirmation, (Merriam, 1988, p. xii). Sociologists (Merriam, 1988; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003) have categorised case studies in a variety of ways. Yin (2003) divides them into exploratory, descriptive and explanatory. The latter, is most relevant here as it moves beyond pure description and links the case to testing or generating theory. It allows the case study to be placed in a conceptual framework, not to be viewed in isolation; this fits with my research questions focusing on how the Catholic school coheres as a community and with wider society, looking to generate theory from data, rather than find data to test a theory.

Three essential characteristics of an ethnographic case study are ‘thick description’, emic observations, and clear boundaries. The relevance of Geertz’s understanding of thick description has been explored in the previous section. The emphasis of emic observations is on adopting the framework and perspectives of the participants rather than on the etic framework, that is those brought by the researchers own culture (Conteh, Gregory, Kearney, & Mor-Sommerfield, 2005). Emic observations focus on the participants’ understanding or perceptions of the events, not on whether they are true or not, (Merriam, 1988, p. 30). One focus of my research study is exploring how Catholic pupils perceive both their own identity and also the identity of their school community, and how they construct this perception. It is not to try and assess whether their perceptions correspond to an outside reality, but how they cohere in their worldview. Early examples of educational ethnographic research (Burgess, 1984c) assumed that we could discover the participants’ understanding of reality, but more recent studies (Haw, 1998) question if we do have access to participants perceptions.

I can only tell my ‘truth’ and I can never be sure the ‘stories that I am told are not merely ‘stories’ told for my benefit (as a white, western, non-Muslim woman) or whether they are even the ‘truths’ of the people telling them. (Haw, 1998, p. 2)

Nevertheless, to return to the concept of subtle realism, ethnography is constrained by a reality that does exist externally. However, the participants’ perceptions of the reality can be limited; they do not have access to all knowledge of their social reality, they may be ‘falsely conscious’ or they could neglect

certain aspects as they are too close to them (L. Cohen, et al., 2000, p. 156). This also raises the question of the reality being described by participants being the one they wish existed; they may describe their school environment as being inclusive and tolerant as that is how they think it should be. Therefore, any ethnographic research observation is important in so far as it enables us to come to a clearer conclusion as to whether participants are doing what they say they are doing (Stringer, 1999).

The third essential characteristic is the delimitation of boundaries, in other words, it has to be made clear what is outside the case in the study (Ragin & Becker, 1994, p. 1). Both a temporal boundary and a geographical boundary need to be clearly established. For example in this research, the schools will be chosen from within the Catholic education system in England and the research is limited to the years between 2005 and 2010. The boundary around the issue studied is the most difficult to define, yet crucial if one is to avoid collecting too much data or degenerating into simple description. Harper (1994) argues that the boundaries need to be established by the participants; 'to understand the community which radiates out of an individual's working world one must see it from the point of view of the individual' (Harper, 1994, p. 146). The limitation of boundaries has a theoretical dimension, involving a selection of only the data relevant to the research questions. It is also essential, that in the present case, the Catholic schools, are not viewed in isolation, but that one shows awareness of the cultural context, (Merriam, 1988, p. 23) such as the wider context of the Catholic community, the historical development of Catholic education in Britain and the social milieu of multicultural Britain today.

One value of the educational ethnographic case study is that it allows for clear links between the case and the intended audience, for example the practitioners in the field, who are concerned with ‘individuals, not aggregates’ (Donmoyer, 1990, p. 197). Its aim is ‘to understand human behaviour at ever increasing depth and to communicate this deepening understanding to others’ (Nesbitt, 2004b, p. 5). It aims to communicate directly with teachers and policy makers. Ball’s (1984) research in Beachside school resulted in a written report, in narrative form that is accessible to the intended audience. Donmoyer (1990, p. 183) argues that quantitative studies can only inform the practitioner in the field, as the findings do not automatically apply to all individuals in the field and can encourage the construction of stereotypes. If the priority is how research aids the individual practitioner, learning through ‘vicarious experience’ is arguably preferable to learning through direct experience. This is for three main reasons, a) accessibility - any individual cannot access all experiences, b) seeing an event, an experience from a different perspective through the researcher’s eyes and c) decreased defensiveness; it is easier for example for teachers to learn from others’ experiences than to confront a phenomenon in their own work (Donmoyer, 1990).

The ethnographic case study does encounter challenges in representing reality discovered, for example ethnography’s emphasis on the visible and the said, ‘narrations, pieces of information, conversations, and discourse’ (Hirschauer, 2006, p. 422). What is not said or made visible can escape notice if the focus is on being present and listening. The incomprehensible, that which is confined by

the field's power relations, or silenced by cultural norms, is not accessible to sociological discourse. Ethnography in schools 'privileges the visible and the audible' (Gordon, Holland, Lahelma, & Tolonen, 2005). Being aware of what is not done or said, is crucial in any ethnography, and is very relevant in this present research. In interviewing young people who are not very articulate about their thoughts, or have never considered the issues that are being researched, it must be ensured that this silence, and the resultant absence of data, is noted and made visible. A major drawback of ethnographic research is that it can only be a snapshot. There is a danger that it creates and crystallises 'ethnic' distinctions and distinctiveness (Nesbitt, 2004b, p. 7). Ethnography can risk emphasising the differences, and ignore the fuzziness, the fluidity of everyday beliefs and experiences. This flaw can be lessened, by using a multiple method approach, involving triangulation, generalisability, and a clear link to theory (see Chapter 5).

Case study research has been heavily criticised for lack of: rigour, external validity, reliability and generalisability (Robson, 2002, p. 180; Yin, 2003, p. 9). At its worst, a case study is simply a description of one particular instance in time, which has no relevance to other cases or theories. It is important to establish how to counter these possible failings, before commencing research. Yin (2003) argues that for generalisability, a case study should aim to interpret its findings through a theoretical framework, either seeking to prove or disprove a theory and the researcher should seek out at least one other case.

A multiple case study is much more robust...and you are still able to arrive at same conclusions then that can lead to external generalisability. (Yin, 2003, p. 54)

Educational ethnographic case study research cannot make the same claims as experimental research, as each case is unique in itself, and because it is dealing with human beings it contains a multitude of variables (Bassey, 2001, p. 20). Researchers have attempted to overcome these problems of validity in a variety of ways. Hammersley (1992) maps out three ways of achieving external validity: obtaining information about the population as a whole and comparing the case to them, using survey research on a random sample of cases and co-ordinating several ethnographic studies. The last two ways are beyond the scope of the individual student researcher, but generalisability could be achieved through comparison with other similar studies undertaken with one's target population, (Silverman, 2005, p. 129) in other words 'fitting your case in the overall picture, showing how similar the case is to others of its type' (Denscombe, 2007, pp. 43-44). In his study of Beachside comprehensive school, Ball (1981) argues that the school was typical of most comprehensive schools at that time (Hammersley, 1992, p. 86). On the other hand, Donmoyer (1990) and Stake (1995) argue case study research concerns 'particularisation, not generalisation' (Stake, 1995, p. 8). The lack of generalisability is not such an issue as all research is tentative especially in 'fields such as education, ... in which there is a concern with the individual' (Donmoyer, 1990, p. 183). However, in my opinion the findings of this present research will be more valid and reliable if substantiated in more than one case, thus the multi site case study approach is more appropriate, although each site (in this instance each Catholic school) is unique. To ensure reliability,

sufficient data needs to be collected and documented to supply evidence to support the findings of the report (Silverman, 2005, p. 224), and there needs to be clear evidence of the methods used (see further Chapter 6).

An alternative solution to the problem of generalisation is ‘fuzzy generalisation’ (Bassey, 2001) as opposed to statistical generalisation (Bell, 2005, p. 12). Bassey (2001) focuses on the concept of relatability, building on an emphasis on the need for ‘thick description’ so that one has all the necessary information to make ‘an informed judgment about issues of fit’ between the situation that is being studied and others (Bell, 2005, p. 12). It is a qualified form of generalisability, focusing on possibility rather than certainty. Although Hammersley (2001) disputes Bassey’s conclusions about fuzzy generalisation, Pratt (2003) claims it is of value as it is more beneficial to practitioners, and enables them to engage in debate with research. It is important that generalisability can be achieved through the concept of fuzzy generalisation, clear comparisons between the case and other similar case studies, and the establishment of strong links between the case and theory. In this research design, the case study functions as a means of generating data about the situation in Catholic schools in England in the early twenty-first century. For it to be more than a description, the findings will be linked to social theory; showing that the data ‘fits with’ or ‘challenges’ the predictions of theories about the development of social capital, or the development of perception of religious identity.

## **4.5 Ethnographic case study research**

Ethnographic research in educational settings appears easily accessible, as the school setting is familiar territory to many. Yet, this poses greater problems for, as Agar (1980) points out, doing research at home is more challenging than studying a totally alien culture. So much can be missed through assumptions of knowledge on the part of the researcher or on the part of the researched. There are many assumptions about shared values and beliefs.

[O]ne may live nearby, speak the same language, and be of the same ethnic background,...a difference in experience may lead to misunderstanding the meaning, the terms and the world of another.

(Hymes, 1996, p. 8)

There is, as Heilman (1973) points out, 'the epistemological liability of taking too much for granted'. The aim then must be to make the familiar strange, adopt the 'professional cloak of the stranger' (Agar, 1980). There are also the practical problems such as the lack of a period of adjustment, the need for the researcher to be continually proactive (Nye, 1992), and the relationship with friends who become one's informants (Heilman, 1973).

An early educational ethnography was Burgess' (1983) work in a Catholic comprehensive school.

[The aim was] to examine social processes and experiences of comprehensive education, focusing on the ways in which members of



one school define and construct their social world. (Burgess, 1983, p.

3)

Burgess's research was validated, by linking it to a theoretical framework based on 'Symbolic Interactionism'; a focus on the meanings participants attribute to social situations. A variety of methods were employed to substantiate his data, detailed observations, unstructured interviews, documentary evidence, and diaries.

A quite different approach was taken by Haw (1998) who aimed to gain an insight into educational experiences of Muslim girls, and to explore issues in feminism, such as the tensions of equality and difference that shape feminist discourses. She studied relationships between teachers (often white and non Muslim) and their Muslim students, basing her research in two schools - a single sex state school and a private Muslim girls' school. However, in contrast to Burgess' focus on the interactions within the school, Haw's study included a detailed reflection on the researchers role; focusing on the issue of white non-Muslim researcher looking at how white power and privilege are exercised.

The Warwick Religious Education Research Unit (WRERU) has undertaken ethnographic research in Religious Education. There have been case studies on religious identity formation (Jackson & Nesbitt, 1993; Nesbitt, 1998a; Østberg 2003b) and inter-faith dialogue (Ipgrave, 2001). This has been based mainly in religious communities, exploring the interplay between RE and religious nurture in the interactions with young people during research (Nesbitt, 1998a), through young people recounting their experiences of RE (Jackson & Nesbitt, 1993), and

through using ethnographic material as source material for curriculum development (Jackson, 1997, 2004b). The research from WRERU has highlighted the fluidity of the religious identity of many of the participants in the research and it has raised awareness of the diversity within religious traditions. This ethnographic research is firmly based in educational research as it seeks to inform the development of curriculum materials in Religious Education (Jackson, 1999, p. 214).

Ethnographic research in education has enriched the Religious Education teacher's understanding of other religions and benefited their teaching materials. While anthropological tradition can challenge stereotypical, prejudiced views on others culture and identity (Gobbo, 2004), often this has remained at a theoretical level. However, the ethnographic research undertaken at Warwick has had an impact on curriculum materials, has provided an awareness of other religions and has challenged the presentation of faith traditions in textbooks (Nesbitt, 1998a). It has revealed the richness of religious traditions so enabling Religious Education to move away from a two dimensional view of 'world religions' (Jackson, 2004b). It also aids faith communities to reflect on themselves and sharpens their perceptions of themselves (Nesbitt, 1998a). It is furthermore of benefit to the participants in the research. If ethnography is viewed as a process rather than a mere method of data collection, it can be seen to encourage young people to reflect on their own beliefs, and becomes a valuable part of their own education. Ethnographic research in Religious Education has encouraged interaction with faith communities, in the work of Ipgrave on dialogue and building bridges through email.

A major factor in the choice of an ethnographic approach in this study is the paucity of qualitative research into the Catholicity of pupils and schools (Grace, 2002, pp. 102,110,119). Ethnographic educational research is able to provide descriptions of what happens in schools, to contextualise, and to give meaning to what is seen and heard. It is perhaps the most naturalistic method of research, able to reflect and represent the experience of the participants in the research. It can illuminate and challenge data obtained in quantitative research (Nesbitt, 2002, p. 136), and raises awareness of diversity within the religious traditions and ‘dispel[s] any lingering notion of homogeneity’. (Nesbitt, 2002, p. 141)

#### **4.6 Reflexivity**

The researcher is integral to the case, through collection and interpretation of the data (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995, p. 317; Merriam, 1988, p. 19). The effect the researcher has on the data, such as the Hawthorne effect (L. Cohen, et al., 2000), i.e. the psychological effects of being aware that you are being observed, is well documented and needs to be taken into account when analysing data. The very presence of a researcher is a potentially transforming relationship. For example Nesbitt’s research into the beliefs of a group of Hindus affected the way those young people saw their faith, (Nesbitt, 1998a). Observing people and interviewing them about one aspect of their life will cause them to reflect and possibly effect changes on that particular aspect. As long as it is explicit, it does not need to be a negative, and detract from the research. The audience needs to be made aware of the researcher’s role within the research, one more voice within

the multi layered reality. Clifford (1986) argues that the self of the ethnographer should be decentred in terms of the authority of the voice, but should be front and centre in the text so that the reader is aware of the bias, and of the incomplete and selective nature of the materials being presented (Wolf, 1999). A weakness of this centrality of the researcher is that an researcher can choose which data to reflect, (Merriam, 1988, p. 34); distort the data findings (Bell, 2005, p. 11), or become an authoritative abstraction (Østberg 2003b, p. 25). The researcher unwittingly produces and creates the participants' views, rather than reflecting them.

Researchers are never able to be detached observers as they bring to any observations the baggage of their own culture. Where they are coming from influences what they see (Agar, 1980, p. 43). Therefore, researchers must reveal their own cultural biases, explicitly acknowledging and disclosing their own selves in research, and to do this requires reflection on the part of the researcher (L. Cohen, et al., 2000). Researchers need to monitor their interactions with participants both for their effect on them and vice versa. There must be a transparency, involving a reflection on the effect the data is having on the researcher and the effect that the researcher is having on the data at each stage of the research. A good example of this is Lubna Nazir Chaudhry's work (Chaudhry, 1997). In my own case study my role as a Religious Education teacher in secondary schools in England from the 1980s to the present day influences the way I perceive and am perceived by others. Although it may not be visible, my Christian faith impacts in a variety of ways, for example sharing a faith with the researched raises aspects of the insider/outsider debate. It has been argued that to

understand religion a belief, or faith is necessary; only an insider can ever portray the social reality that they live in, for

religion is an area which is not easily accessible to the outsider, foreigner or non-participant (Darshan Singh [1999] cited in Knott, 2005, p. 244).

This view is perhaps based on a misunderstanding that knowledge comes from closer contact with reality (Hammersley, 1992). Some (Harris (1979) cited in McCutcheon, 1999, p. 18) have argued that it is necessary to be outside the religion to fully understand it, while others (Jaffee, 1999, p. 283) claim that belief is irrelevant. This issue of insider/outsider is much more complicated than a straight dichotomy of in or out. Heilman (1973) in his research uses the metaphor of 'doors' and 'rooms' in his research as an Orthodox Jew. Collins (2001) rejects Heilman's image of doors and rooms and of being in or out, and highlights the fact that membership of a group is multifaceted, an intricate process of negotiation, (Collins, 2001, p. 87; Dandelion, 2004). An understanding of the insider/ outsider issue is crucial to this present research in two ways, in my role of researcher and in the participants' perceptions of themselves as being insiders or outsiders in the context of the Catholic school.

In my role as a researcher, sometimes I am perceived as an insider, sharing the same faith, and sometimes as an outsider, because I am not a member of that school community. There is the danger that participants falsely assume that I share, or know more than I do about their beliefs and practices. It is just as important for me to be open to the diversity of practices within the

school setting, and not to assume they are all insiders, as it is to make the participants aware of my role as an outsider so they explain everything rather than presuming my understanding. However, there is a danger of too much reflexivity, for:

[I]f classical ethnography's vice was the slippage from the ideal of detachment to actual indifference, that of present day reflexivity is the tendency for the self-absorbed Self to lose sight of the culturally different Other. (Rosaldo [1993 p.7] cited in Anderson, 2006, p. 385)

For educational research to remain true to its aims it must remain focused on the 'Other', and avoid the trap of falling into a reflection on the researcher's experience of research. Throughout the thesis my role as researcher needs to be visible, as who I am affects the generation of data, the interpretation, analysis, and the final written thesis, yet it is not the main focus of the research.

#### **4.7 Researching young people's views**

The 'others' within this research are the participants, the majority of whom are children. Larsen (1990 p.22) argues that 'for the most part [anthropologists] have looked AT children rather than listened to them' (Østberg 2003b, p. 29). The sociologists understanding of childhood has changed, in as much as it is now accepted that children's voices should be heard (Lewis & Lindsay, 2002, p. 196), they should be 'more valued participants in our society' (National Children's Bureau (NCB), 2004). One of the underlying themes of this research is that children are reflective social actors (G. Smith, 2005, p. 1), active agents in their own right, who influence their environment (Morrow, 1999, p. 757), and 'active partners in a socially constructed world' (Østberg 2003b, p. 26). However, perceiving children as

competent social actors does not necessarily mean that research should be conducted in the same way as with adults (S. Punch, 2002, p. 338).

[It is a challenge to] maximise children's ability to express themselves at the point of data-gathering; enhancing their willingness to communicate and the richness of the findings. (Hill, [1997, p. 180] in Punch 2002)

In many cases, focusing on interviewing older students ensures a more articulate response, but maybe a more inhibited response. The added challenge for the teacher-researcher is the need to avoid introducing specific terminology to clarify (Nesbitt, 2002, p. 140) and to overcome the natural reaction to avoid silences, and to correct and clarify the young person's response. Punch (2002, p. 338) argues that it is too simplistic to consider children as 'either the same or different from adults', and so research with children should be seen as part of 'a continuum', which includes adults.

With research into young people's religious views, the researcher is inevitably 'changing' the participants' lives, if only in a positive manner (Nesbitt, 1998a). When researching into a sensitive issue such as children's views of those who are different to them, by opening the debate one is highlighting an issue that might cause the participants to be more aware of differences. One may also cause participants either consciously or unconsciously to alter their behaviour. The emphasis in this present research is on raising awareness of the 'voices' of young people within the Catholic education system. This raises ethical questions: the value that is put on their perception comes from the researcher perspective, and

the young people are not clamouring to put forward their views on religion. In some cases, their response is that this is not something about which they have really thought. However, children's perspectives on religion are crucially important, as it is during childhood and adolescence, that religious beliefs and practices are established (Hyde [1990] cited in Nesbitt, 2002, p. 148). Research is needed into the diversity of young peoples voices, which constitute an undeveloped area (Lewis & Lindsay, 2002, p. 196). The following chapter will consider the methods employed to ensure that the research is organised 'in a manner that optimises the opportunity for children's perspectives to be listened to – and heard' (Lewis & Lindsay, 2002, p. 197).

#### **4.8 Conclusion**

The above has highlighted the fact that all research has to clarify and make visible its ontological and epistemological stance. This research is placed within the framework of subtle realism. Reality is external, yet can only be perceived and interpreted through human constructions. For the purposes of this research, the ethnographic method is the most relevant method for this research, the most naturalistic, however, it does require a greater reflexivity on the part of the researcher; the role of the researcher has to be very visible, yet must not be the focus. Reflections on my role of researcher and on the majority of participants' status as children in an adult dominated world are two of the threads that will be woven throughout the whole thesis. This educational research study seeks to achieve validity, through ensuring relevance to social theories and to current practice. For the research to have value it must address questions of validity and



generalisability, and these issues will be further addressed in the next chapter and throughout the thesis.

## **Chapter 5: The method**

### **5.1 Introduction**

The previous chapter described the methodology that underpins this research and this chapter outlines the methods employed to generate and analyse data. It begins with a description of the ethical guidelines for this study, followed by an examination of the rationale behind the choice of the case study schools. The central section of the chapter discusses the main methods employed: semi-structured interviews and observation. The next section explains the recording and transcribing of data, and the methods of analysis and the writing up of the ethnography. The final section outlines the framework for the reporting of the ethnographic findings.

### **5.2 Ethical guidelines**

When undertaking ethnographic research in education, ‘the ethical risks are substantial’ (Stake, 1995, p. 45). ‘Participants rarely initiate research’ (Bogdan and Biklan 1992 p. 54), so it is the responsibility of the researcher to protect the participants (L. Cohen, et al., 2000, p. 142). The transitory nature of PhD research is a particular concern; with clear time limited boundaries, the researcher withdraws from the field when sufficient data has been collected. At its worst this can be viewed just as ‘smash and grab’ (Hammersley, 1992). To mitigate as much as possible any harmful effects on participants it is important to work with the researched, to view them as participants rather than subjects, and focus on the individual’s contribution to the research (Oliver, 2003, p. 6).

Obtaining access to the research area is often problematic, and so it is important to identify a gatekeeper (Oliver, 2003, p. 39), who is sympathetic to the research process or views research as of value to their institution. One gatekeeper who was approached in this research denied access, as she was concerned that research in Catholic schools would be used in a negative manner. In schools, permission is usually given by the Headteacher, and participants' participation may be affected by their attitude to their management (Bryman, 2004, p. 519). There is both a responsibility on the part of the researcher towards the gatekeeper and a need for an awareness of the continuing relationship between the gatekeeper and the participants (British Sociological Association, March 2002).

All participants have a right to anonymity and confidentiality; this has to be taken very seriously and is not as simple as just changing names (Oliver, 2003, p. 79). Care needs to be taken to protect their identity (Burgess, 1984b, p. 204). Within my study names of schools and participants have been anonymised, pseudonyms are used and any details that may lead to identification have been removed. Participants' responses are quoted in the thesis, with a reference to school and year group, or with the use of a pseudonym; the key to these references can be found in appendix B. The interviewer is often privileged to sensitive information and while interviewees may welcome the chance to open up about a particular issue, they might later be reluctant to see it in print. There must also be awareness of responsibility to the young participants, 'where child protection is an issue...the researcher has a duty to take steps to protect the child or other children' (National Children's Bureau (NCB), 2004). I have ensured that I comply with all legal requirements concerning working with young people (British

Educational Research Association, 2004 paragraph 17), and ethical approval was granted by the University of Warwick in June 2006.

### **5.3 The selection of the case study schools**

One of the major issues for the ethnographic case study research is the choice of cases. Although, the cases chosen need to fit the research questions, the selection of cases is often not wholly in the hands of the researcher. In this research letters requesting participation were mailed to ten Catholic schools within diocese A, but positive replies were only received from two schools. The decision was then taken to extend the scope to diocese B, where the three schools approached, replied positively. The number of potential cases was now five, a primary and secondary in diocese A, and two secondary and a sixth form college in diocese B. After an analysis of the information obtained in the initial visits, it was decided to focus on Catholic secondary schools, and exclude primary and sixth form colleges, so a third Catholic secondary school was included from diocese A (a description of all six schools is in appendix A). The decision to focus on Catholic secondary schools was to ensure a clear basis of comparison, excluding primary and sixth form colleges, because of the differing pupils ages, structure and ethos. One of the initial Catholic secondary schools was also excluded as the school was facing several internal and external challenges, which would impact on participants' perceptions of their school. The schools finally selected were, in diocese A, St Julian's, a 11-18 years Catholic secondary school, St Catherine's, a 11-18 years Catholic secondary school, and in diocese B St Margaret's a 11-16 years Catholic secondary school. These three secondary schools are the main source of data. In

practice, St Julian's generated more data than the other two, as more opportunities were available to conduct further follow up interviews and observe within the school.

#### **5.4 The methods: semi-structured interview**

The previous chapter established that this research has adopted the ethnographic case study, a qualitative approach, as the preferred method for generating data. The choice of research methods is determined by the research questions, (see Introduction) yet it is also constrained by cost, time, and the strengths of the researcher (L. Cohen, et al., 2000, p. 74). Since the 1980s, the mixed methods approach has become more common (Alise & Teddlie, 2010, p. 120; Bryman, 2004, p. 463). The paradigm wars, which contrasted 'deep rich observational' data with 'hard generalisable' data, have been superseded by debate of the value of the mixed methods research as a third way (R. B. Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 15). Its proponents argue that it gives research greater rigour and validity (Bryman, 2004, p. 448), but such an approach cannot be an add-on, it must fit within the ontological and epistemological framework of the research and should not be employed on the basis of the more data generated the more valid the research findings. Therefore this research remains wholly qualitative, rather than a mixed methods approach as defined by Alise and Teddlie (2010, p. 112). The development of methods used did not follow a clear linear path, but was a process developing through constant referral between ethnographic experiences and the theoretical framework.

The main method used in my research was the semi-structured group interview. Interviews although an artificial way of obtaining information, are a valid means of data collection for the ethnographer (O' Reilly, 2005, p. 112). They are not merely a conversation initiated by the researcher to obtain information, but should be seen as a source of data generation. They are a social interaction between two humans, where 'knowledge [is] generated' (Kvale, 1996, p. 42). They are the means of allowing the interviewees the opportunity to share their 'stories of the lived world' and of providing the participants with a voice, and thus recognising their knowledge of their own stories and views (Cisneros-Puebla, Faux, & Mey, 2004). The ethnographic interview 'facilitates, catalyses and exemplifies...self- narration' (Nesbitt, 2004b, p. 123). It is no longer a mere means of data collection, but a process more fluid and multi layered, changing both researcher's and participants' knowledge and understanding of the topic under discussion. This requires a greater degree of reflexivity; the researcher needs to reflect not only on the variables in the life of the interviewee, but also in his/her own life.

The key characteristics of the qualitative research interview (Kvale, 1996, p. 29) are that it should be situated in the life world of participants, and attempt to obtain descriptions of different aspects of participants' lives focusing on specific situations, with the interviewer interpreting the meaning of what is said. The knowledge generated, although interpreted by the researcher, is just one description of a particular specific situation in time and place and not a definitive description of the participants' world reality. Group interviews have value within ethnographic research as they allow the participants an opportunity to narrate

their views on an issue, which add to the knowledge of the issue amongst the participants, as well as in the research community. There are many different types of research interview, (Bryman, 2004, p. 319; L. Cohen, et al., 2000, p. 270; Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995, p. 156). The three relevant types here are the informal individual, the semi-structured individual and the semi-structured group interview.

The unscheduled informal interview that takes place within the context of participant observation is useful, when the research is already underway and the researcher is able to ask more specific and relevant questions (Agar, 1980). Burgess (1983) gained many insights through informal conversations with staff in the course of his participant observation. Informal interviews can also reinforce or challenge data generated in more formal interviews.

The semi-structured type of interview is described as a ‘high preparation, high risk, high gain, and high analysis operation’ (Wengraf cited in Seale, 2004, p. 186). It is most appropriate within my research, as it enables the researcher to focus the interview on a specific topic, and yet allows for flexibility. It gives scope for questions to be asked out of sequence, taking the form of a ‘controlled conversation’ (Burgess, 1984b, p. 165). The relationship between interviewer and interviewee is more equal, neither having complete control over the conversation, which can be a risk for both parties. The interviewer takes a stance of ‘deliberate naiveté’ (Kvale, 1996, p. 30), being open to new and unexpected ideas, while the interviewees’ views are often ambiguous and open to change through the interviewing process. The main disadvantages of the semi-structured interview

are that it is time-consuming (although less so than the unstructured interview), not easily codified (as the outcomes are so varied), and yet still, to some extent, an artificial construct.

There is no one right way of interviewing, no single correct format that is appropriate for all situations, and no single way of wording questions that will always work...Therein lie the challenges of depth interviewing: situational responsiveness and sensitivity to get the best data possible. (Genzuck, 2003, p. 6)

One way of overcoming the issue of the artificiality of the interview situation is the semi-structured group interview; it falls between participant observation and the individual interview. Although still an artificial device, it is more natural than the individual interview (Seale, 2004, p. 197), emphasising the 'interactive and communicative nature of social action and social meaning' (p.198). Group discussions are more like normal everyday conversations, with known rules and norms (O' Reilly, 2005, p. 129), where the presence of the researcher becomes less obtrusive, and participants may be more open (O' Reilly, 2005, p. 131). Lewis (1992) has undertaken a detailed analysis of the use of group interviews with children and how they differs from individual interview. Group interviews tend to generate information, which is more in line with the group norms (Lewis, 1992, p. 414). The comfort of a group may encourage children to voice views that they would not have done individually, and to stimulate new ideas. It also avoids the problems resulting from a child being reluctant to answer questions, or feeling that he or she has to supply an answer however nonsensical. A good example of the use of focus groups in research with children is Jenny Pearce's work on



exploring young people's relationship to local space (Seale, 2004, p. 198). A disadvantage of group interviews is that they may reinforce a group identity, a 'preferred identity' (Dunlop, 2008, p. 26). However, within the context of my research, group interviews are of value as what is sought is the view of the pupils as members of a Catholic community rather than as individuals, so as to build a picture of how the school community is perceived.

The size of the group is important, and groups of four to six children are most effective (Lewis, 1992). They often work better where the participants are already at ease with each other (Lewis, 1992, p. 418). The interviewees in my research were chosen in consultation with the gatekeepers in the three main schools. In St Julian's the school already had an established process for selecting students for focus groups. Indeed such groups were used in interviews of prospective staff and to evaluate aspects of school life. The deputy head, the gatekeeper, made arrangements for the groups to be drawn from across the school, including staff. When I sought to follow up ideas from the initial interviews, the gatekeeper arranged for particular groups to be available, for example to interview students involved with chaplaincy. In St Margaret's and St Catherine's the head of RE selected students to participate in interviews. The St Julian's participants are not a random sample; there is the likelihood that the deputy headteacher who acts as gatekeeper, will select participants who reflect a positive view of the school. This should not affect the validity of my research, as long as any analysis or generalisability of the research findings reflects an awareness that the chosen sample of young people within the school may have been chosen because they are

likely to represent a positive view of their Catholic school. The groups and numbers of interviewees are set out appendix B.

Informed consent is a particular issue when researching in a school and must contain four elements, competence, voluntarism, full information, and comprehension (Diener and Crandall [1978] cited in L. Cohen, et al., 2000, p. 51). Consent was sought from not only the head teacher, but also the parents or guardians in the case of children and the young people themselves (British Sociological Association, March 2002 paragraph 30). Burgess (1984a) explained that in his research the head teacher gave permission for him to interview the staff and pupils, but the participants had the right to refuse to take part. All participants in my study were given the opportunity to withdraw from interviews. Although only two students in the whole study did, I ensured that for all interviews the school had arrangements in place for the students to return to class or be supervised elsewhere.

A key to the success of an interview is the relationship between interviewer and interviewee and it depends on a rapport being established between participant and researcher (Bryman, 2004, p. 119), which is a skill not always easily acquired (Lofland 1971 p.90 cited in Hitchcock & Hughes, 1995). The rapport or lack of rapport needs to be reflected upon within the research as it forms part of the whole picture of the interview. In interviewing young people in a school setting, the gulf between teacher and pupil is always going to be present, but that does not necessarily negate the possibility of establishing a rapport. I always introduced myself as a PhD researcher, but to some of the participants in St. Catherine's, I

was already known as a supply teacher, while in St Julian of Norwich, some of the staff interviewed were aware of my role as a governor. Although I was always very aware of the conflict between my role as a teacher and researcher, the students were not, indeed, one year 12 student in St Julian's remarked at the end of the interview how much they had enjoyed the discussion, but they would not have been able to talk like that with a teacher present.

The power within any research study lies with the researcher, in particular when the majority of participants are children (see Chapter 5). This imbalance can be mitigated to some extent by constant awareness and reflection of this issue throughout the research process (Østberg 2003b, p. 27). It is a privilege for others to allow you insights into their world, and the responsibilities to these participants must be recognised and the imbalance of power cannot be ignored. Research should be open, but there are times when being open will not result in any meaningful data (Burgess, 1984b, p. 199). For example when researching potentially sensitive or controversial issues such as treatment of other faiths in a Roman Catholic school, being open to all participants may result in the interviewer being told what the participants feel to be the 'correct view'. Another issue is that at times the researcher might be required not to be totally truthful, (L. Cohen, et al., 2000, p. 65). For example when interviewing the students I denied knowledge of various aspects of school organisation, to allow them to tell their perceptions rather than just substantiate mine.

In the practicality of the structure of the interview, it is important to consider the type and schedule of questions to be asked. The emphasis needs to be on open

ended and indirect questions, questions that will encourage a detailed response and the sequencing of questions within the interview is important. Patton (1980) argues that less threatening questions should be at the beginning of the interview, to put the interviewee at ease (L. Cohen, et al., 2000, p. 280). Thus it is useful to begin with direct questions requiring factual answers and to move from this to more indirect, non-specific questions. It is however the indirect, non-specific questions, which the interviewer hopes are going to produce the most detailed and relevant responses. As Kvale (1996, p. 145) points out, the aim is for short questions, which will produce long answers (see appendix B for interview question schedule).

The focus of an interview can be maintained not just through questions, but also through other prompts. When interviewing, visual prompts, such as pictures, photos and concept maps may be very useful; Dunlop's (2008) study in Eastern Europe used photograph elicitation very successfully to generate data. In a study of Muslim schools, Gent (2005, p. 48) used photographs as 'prompts' enabling the participants to describe what was happening in 'hfiz' classes. On a practical note, when interviewing children visual aids help to minimise boredom and maintain a child's concentration. In three of my early interviews in St Julian's, photographs were used as prompts, but this was not wholly successful as students became distracted, as the images chosen were not immediately recognisable to the students, for example the two photos showing a nun in a habit and a Muslim woman in a chador. The interview became side tracked into an explanation as to who these people could be, as neither were recognisable to the students, although this did give insights into the participants' lack of knowledge.

Where the interview takes place has some influence on how it is conducted and this needs to be taken into account when interpreting the results. The rooms allocated within the schools, included a plain anonymous meeting room, RE classrooms, free spaces between classrooms, and the chaplain's office. Being able to talk freely without interruptions is ideal, but in a busy school this was rarely achieved for the length of the interview. Interruptions from the school bell, people walking through the room and noise from other pupils at break or lesson changeover time were inevitable. As to the length of interview, school-based research has to fit in with school timetabling, but the aim for the length of the interview was 45 minutes; any shorter and there is the risk of not having time to establish the rapport essential for the conversation, any longer and the transcribing becomes a difficulty.

Any data generated by group or individual interview needs to be shown to be credible and to be validated (Seale, 2004, p. 77). The data generated has to have some connection with or relevance to the external world, otherwise the recorded and transcribed interview becomes an account of no more value than a fictional account of the same incident. Within interviews, there is the danger that participants are always going to be tempted to tell the interviewer what they think the interviewer wants to hear. In addition, their perception of reality might not be substantiated by subsequent participant observation, where the researcher observes whether what is said is in fact what is practised. Stringer (1999, p. 52) argues the researcher must always be aware of the different discourses, 'what should happen, what people say is happening, and what is happening'. There are

several ways data can be validated, through internal triangulation (obtaining the same data from the same person using a different method), external triangulation (comparing that data with similar from other participants) or through participant observation (O' Reilly, 2005). The data generated in this research was validated by external triangulation and through observation.

## **5.5 The methods: observations**

Observation was employed to contextualise data generated in interviews. My role was that of participant as observer and that of observer as participant (Seale, 2004, p. 230). I was a participant in so much as I was recognised as a school governor, or Religious Education teacher, but an observer for the purposes of the research, in Seale's words the 'marginal native' (Seale, 2004, p. 233). Observation allows for a better understanding of contexts, and avoids reliance on preconceptions (Patton, 2002, p. 262). However, observations can only be made of a small part of school life, and are limited by time and place.

Experience is messy, [there is a] need to be in the right place at the right time, but [you] don't know what is the right time and place.

(Wolf, 1999, p. 354)

Observations in school are challenging, and can be an uncomfortable process (Hammersley, 1984). Within the confines of the classroom, there is 'no ready made position available' for the researcher and 'finding one's own space can be a daunting process' (Gordon, et al., 2005, p. 116). It is very difficult to minimise the effect of one's presence as soon as another adult enters a classroom the natural balance of one adult to students is disturbed, King (1979) gives insights into how

to minimise the researcher's impact in the classroom (L. Cohen, et al., 2000, p. 187). When observing classroom teaching, however much the teacher was assured that I was not there in an official capacity, he/she reacted as if it was some form of inspection.

Nevertheless, observation of the physical surroundings can reinforce what is said, for example by substantiating the claim that there is a crucifix in every classroom. It can also challenge. For example the claim that the voluntary mass in school is always full as the students could see people standing by the door as they went passed, was not substantiated by observation, people did stand by the door but there were still plenty of empty seats. The researcher's role in observation is paramount; there is no detached observer recording reality as observations are no more than the impression of the researcher at that moment in time. 'Selective perceptions' (Patton, 2002, p. 264), and the very fact of observing and taking field notes, alters what is there to be seen. It must also be remembered that, 'for everything that is noticed a multitude of things go unseen, for everything that is written down a multitude of things are forgotten' (Ball, 1984, p. 78).

Another means of validating the data generated is through analysis of school documentation, the 'what should happen'. Much is now in the public domain. School prospectuses and policies are online, as are Ofsted reports, and, in the case of Catholic schools, Section 48 reports (inspection of the Religious Education in the school by the local diocese). It was also of value to look beyond the immediate school and compare perceptions with the policies of the local

diocese and documents originating from the Vatican. The absence of documentation is just as valid as the presence. Documents are accorded privilege in society, and it is important to interpret their role and purpose; identifying by whom and for whom are they constructed (Seale, 2004, p. 234). An analysis of documentation is another layer in the compilation of accounts of the reality, looking at what people say they ought to be doing in the policies, compared with what they say they are doing in interviews and what the researcher perceives them to be doing through observation. However, the focus in this research is on the participants' perceptions, and documents are only referred to if they substantiate or challenge these perceptions.

## **5.6 Recording and transcribing data**

A crucial part of any research method is the recording and transcribing of data. One problem that does arise with group interviewing is the recording of the interview (Bryman, 2004, p. 348). The options of the interviewer are: taking notes at the time; writing up notes at the end, audio-taping or videoing the whole proceedings. Within a group interview writing contemporaneous notes is difficult, while writing immediately after the interview is dependent on the interviewer's interpretation of what is relevant. Therefore, I decided that the most effective method would be audio recording; which will generate a large amount of material to transcribe, but would give one less layer/filter of interpretation of the interview. However, with this method, the researcher immediately marks out this 'conversation' as more formal, more important and this may influence how interviewees respond, (O' Reilly, 2005), while some may refuse to be interviewed



‘on tape’ (Bryman, 2004, p. 330). All the interviews in my research were recorded on a digital recorder, which enable copies to be downloaded to the computer. The majority of student participants in my research appreciated their responses being recorded, and soon became less aware of the presence of the recorder. For my own benefit rough notes were taken through the interview to enhance the understanding of the recording and as a fall back in the case of the recording failing. The notes were made deliberately more illegible than usual so participants could not read them, a technique also employed by Hammersley (1984, p. 51).

The interview only becomes relevant for research purposes when it is recorded and subsequently transcribed. However a written transcription is an ‘artificial construct’ (Kvale, 1996, p. 163), as it can never totally capture the interview as a fluid encounter between individuals, because inevitably only the researcher is transcribing the interview, and not all nuances, feelings and understandings are captured. The initial interviews were transcribed in detail, but in subsequent interviews, the detailed transcription focused on elements relevant to the research question. The importance of continually returning to the original data cannot be over-emphasised. For example the conversations interviewees had about the terrible behaviour of students in other local schools were not transcribed at first. It was only after hearing similar stories in several interviews, that I realised that this was a very important element in the students perceptions of their own school, (see further discussions in Chapter 10).

## **5.7 Methods of analysing the ethnographic data**

Analysis is an on-going process in ethnographic research, not an end task. Data interpretation occurs in the process of data generation and analysis or discovering of meanings from first generation of data. Analysis is the search for patterns (Spradley 1980:85), and coding is one way to capture those patterns, a first step towards data analysis (Seale, 2004, p. 306). Miles and Huberman (1994) describe codes as labels, which assign meaning to chunks of material (Østberg 2003b, p. 38). Successful coding emerges from the data, and links into the theoretical framework, it is both deductive and inductive (Seale, 2004, p. 313), and is 'a dialectical and creative process' (Østberg 2003b, p. 40). Reading the transcripts of interviews it became apparent that participants' description of Catholicism within the school reflected elements of the communal and ethical dimensions outlined by Hervieu-Léger (1998). Once this was recognised a return to the transcripts highlighted references to the emotional and to a lesser extent the cultural, dimension of religion. The coding of material under these four dimensions provided a framework to view participants' perceptions of their Catholic school.

Computer analysis is becoming increasingly important even within qualitative research. In my research NVivo 7 was used in some analysis of data. The value of using such a program as NVivo 7 is that more data can be coded, contextualised and analysed in the time available, and more refined coding systems can be developed (Seale, 2004, p. 316). However, it does create another layer of interpretation between the data and the reader (Bazeley, 2007, p. 9). Other

dangers are that once the codes have been established, the researcher is not open to new directions, and the focus is on quantifiable data, which can result in a fragmentation of data into retrieval chunks (Bryman, 2004, p. 419). However, Nvivo 7 has many advantages (Bazeley, 2007, p. 2), as it avoids degeneration into anecdotalism, enhances the validity of data, (Bryman, 2004, p. 420; Seale, 2004, p. 317) and ensures transparency in the process of analysis (Bryman, 2004, p. 420). For Nvivo to be of benefit to ethnographic research it must be used as a tool of analysis. It was of use for example when exploring the Catholicity of the school, as a large number of transcripts could be searched (see appendix C). The development of codes was also aided by Nvivo. Although, Nvivo was used to aid analysis, it cannot replace listening to the recordings and the detailed reading and re-reading of transcripts and field notes.

Following all the fieldwork, the withdrawal from the field, and the analysis of the data comes the process of writing the ethnography. Writing up is a continual process, rooted in the fieldwork, and yet linked in with theory. From the point of view of subtle realism, any written ethnography is more than a work of fiction; it is constrained by reality, yet it is not a reproduction of reality. An important decision taken early on in the writing up was to allow the voices of the participants to be heard, in the context of their school life (the experience-near), yet contextualise in the framework of the theory (the experience-distant). However, the structure for reporting the participants' perceptions is necessarily my own, influenced by my values and perceptions. It is not possible to report participants' views objectively, as there are always layers of interpretation, both mine and theirs (Jackson & Nesbitt, 1993). Østberg's (2003) work exemplifies

this process of interpretation, connecting the participants' worldview with the theoretical theory.

Dissemination of research is an important element of any study. It is not practicable or advisable to allow participants access to the research when it is in process (Oliver, 2003, pp. 62-63). The researcher has an ethical responsibility to the research community (British Educational Research Association, 2004 paragraph 42); to undertake research in such a way that it will not prejudice any future research to be carried out in the same area and an ethical duty to ensure that the knowledge created in the research is disseminated not just to participants but also to other practioners in the field and to the educational research community (British Educational Research Association, 2004 paragraph 46; British Sociological Association, March 2002 paragraph 5).

## **5.8 Framework for reporting the ethnographic findings**

With any ethnography there has to be selection of the material. It is eased into a writing framework, but even a framework that has developed out of the data, will inevitably not enable all data to be included. For the purposes of my research the framework was developed in a process of review of the research questions, and the data generated, and then a return to the research questions and theoretical framework of Hervieu-Léger's (1998) understanding of the dimensions of religion and the concepts of bonding and bridging capital.

Chapters 6 to 10 outline the ethnographic findings; these chapters developed from an analysis of the participants' responses and reflect their emphases as much as possible. Chapters 6, and 7 address the first of the research questions outlined in the introduction through an exploration of the participants' responses to questions about the Catholicity of the school. Chapter 8 addresses the second research question through an examination of participants' perceptions of the transmission and reception of the Catholic faith tradition in school. In these three chapters the participants' responses are viewed through the lens of Hervieu-Léger's concepts of religion as a chain of memory and bricolage. A phrase that was repeated in several interviews was the value of the 'sense of community' within the Catholic school and this is explored in Chapter 9. Participants did not refer to an awareness of a sense of boundary of their school community, yet their responses reflected such awareness and it is this that is explored in Chapter 10.

## **5.9 Conclusion**

This chapter has outlined the methods of data generation, which underpin this ethnographic case study. It has shown that the favoured method of data generation is that of the semi-structured interview, and participant observation. It has stressed the value of listening to the participants' voices, and the challenges of reporting these voices. The framework for reporting the ethnographic findings has been clearly explained, and will thus aid an understanding of the next five chapters that explain the perspectives of members of three English Catholic secondary schools, on various aspects concerning the Catholicity of their schools.

## **Chapter 6: Perceptions of Catholicity of the Catholic secondary school**

### **6.1 Introduction**

This chapter explores the first part of the ethnographic findings, following the framework outlined in the last section of the previous chapter. It addresses the first of the research questions concerning the ways in which a Catholic school reflects the Catholic faith tradition, by describing the participants' views of the Catholic nature of their school. Chapter 7 continues with this investigation of the first research question exploring further the fragmentary nature of the Catholicity within school, through an exploration of participants' perceptions of their own Catholic identity. Before considering the findings from my research in three Catholic secondary schools, it is important to consider the understanding of religion and culture employed in this research. The focus in both chapters is on Catholicism as a lived faith in the schools, on religion as 'religion vécue' or 'lived practice' (Hervieu-Léger, 2000). Religion is not viewed as a bounded, structured controlled entity, defined by the criteria of identification required by the ecclesiastical institution (Hervieu-Léger, 1998, p. 224), but it is seen as it is understood and lived by the participants. Congregational studies research (Guest, et al., 2004) also emphasises this view of religion, examining the culture of the congregation rather than the understanding of the institution of the Church.

[Culture is] 'who we (presently) are and all the ways in which we reinforce and recreate who we are' by 'what we do, what we make,

and how we talk about ourselves.’ (Ammerman [1998] cited in Richter, 2004, p. 173)

The culture of a school is not imposed (A. P. Cohen, 2007, p. 17), but is found in the ‘webs of significance’ (Geertz 1975) spun by the participants. However, the researcher’s own observations are relevant in reinforcing or challenging participants’ perceptions and illuminating the silences in the data (Richter, 2004).

The participants’ description of the visible signs and activities of Catholicism, the experience of the religious, and the values and ethos of the school, correspond to Hervieu-Léger’s (1998) description of the dimensions of Christianity. These dimensions – communal, ethical, emotional and cultural – offer a framework to interpret the Catholic life of a school (see Chapter 2). The first section of this chapter explores the communal dimension, which consists of the aspects of the religion that seek to bind the community together and differentiate it from other communities. The communal dimension of religion is reflected in perceptions of how the school structures time and structures or fills space, in other words the ‘pattern of activity’ (Ammerman & Farnsley, 1997, p. 54). The students’ descriptions of how the space within school are structured to reflect the Catholic faith, is examined first. The next section explores how time within the school is structured to allow for opportunities to experience the Catholic faith. The second half of the chapter explores participants’ description of examples of the emotional dimension (see Chapter 2) within the Catholic school. The responses are quoted with reference to their school (J – St Julian’s, C – St Catherine’s, M – St Margaret’s), their school year (7-12), and whether a focus group interview (fgi) or an individual interview (ii) (see Appendix B - table 4).

## **6.2 Communal dimension: the physical environment**

This section considers the ‘what we make’ aspect of the school culture. The artefacts and places described were not created by the student participants, but were placed there for the students, and none of the interviewees referred to student contributions to the Catholicity, for example the displays of students’ own religious artwork on the corridor walls, or displays in the RE classrooms. However, it is the significance participants give to the artefacts that reveal their assumptions about the school community and about Catholicism (Ammerman & Farnsley, 1997, p. 59). The first response of many participants was to mention the crucifix, as the most visible sign of Catholicism in school.

In our school...there are loads of crucifixes in the classrooms and  
pictures of Jesus stuff like... (Jy9fgi)

A crucifix...[we have] got one in every room. (Cy9fgi)

This was not surprising as in all the rooms in which the interviews took place there was a crucifix on the wall. The presence of a crucifix in the classroom is in line with common practice in Catholic schools.

Crucifixes in the school will remind everyone, teachers and students  
alike, of this familiar and moving presence of Jesus, the "Master" who  
gave his most complete and sublime teaching from the cross.

(Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988)

Students immediately recognised the crucifix as a Catholic symbol, but there was no evidence that they viewed it as anything more than part of the furniture of the classroom. In one of the interview rooms the crucifix was broken, and this was mentioned by the students, but not as a cause for concern. Although they did speak



of liturgy and prayer with reference to the chapel space in school, and the prayers on classroom walls, no mention was made of the crucifix as a focus for prayers or liturgy. Other visible signs of Catholic identity that were mentioned were; the statues of the school saint or of the Virgin Mary; the symbol of a cross in the school logo; pictures of Jesus; and pictures of the Pope. The question of what makes a school Catholic required the participants to ‘make the familiar strange’ (Agar, 1980). They were being asked to describe a school environment that they experienced everyday and to highlight the Catholic elements within it. This involved them having an awareness of their school environment and an understanding of Catholic symbols. The value of group interviews became apparent in the discussions some groups had about Catholic artefacts in school, reminding each other of artefacts that could be seen within school.

The other aspect of the physical environment that was mentioned was the school chapel.

We have a chapel and we can go in there at break times.

(My7fgi)

[There is a] chapel down by the PE rooms ...[it has] candles, altar, [a]

picture of Jesus.

(My9fgi)

St Julian’s did not have a chapel at the time of the research, but was in the process of negotiating space for a prayer room, as the school leadership felt it was important to have a multi functional space. St Julian’s staff felt that their school lacked a chapel, but it was not something mentioned by students even when explaining why their school was not as Catholic as others. The Congregation for Catholic Education, argues that for a Catholic school the ideal is close proximity to

a Catholic Church (1988 para. 30) and many Catholic primary schools in England do have a close connection. The Catholic secondary schools involved in this research did not have this connection, although in St Margaret's once a year the whole school would walk to the local Catholic Church for Mass. Patrick O'Donoghue, the Bishop of Lancaster (May 2006) argued that Catholic schools should have a chapel, which 'should *not* be used for other school activities outside of prayer and catechesis'. Arthur (1995) viewed the failure to reserve Blessed Sacrament in school chapels as a sign of the dilution of the Catholic faith within Catholic schools, a sign of the 'ebbing tide'. However in schools, where space is always at a premium, being able to maintain a room as a consecrated space reflects the importance given to a chapel within the structuring of space in school (Grace, 2002, p. 261).

In St Margaret's and St Catherine's, students perceived the chapel as a place for the celebration of Mass, as well as somewhere where they could go in their break times to pray for others and for the dead. Although, not all students viewed the chapel as important, 'no one really goes in [the chapel], they go and eat their dinner in it' (My9fgi). However it was discussions, such as whether they were allowed to eat their lunch in the chapel that gave further insight into the students' understanding of the religious space in schools. Richter (2004, p. 181) who also found that the interviewees focused on 'detailing of fairly mundane cultural minutiae', referred to Bourdieu (1990) who argued that 'cultures' symbolic structures are embedded in such everyday practices'. It is these 'mundane cultural minutiae', which give an insight into the Catholic culture of the school. The St Margaret's students perceived the chapel as an accessible space; somewhere they

felt was part of their school. It would be interesting to develop how their views of the school chapel differed from their views of Church, which possibly would not be seen as a place where they could 'eat their dinner'.

### **6.3 Communal dimension: Catholic liturgies in school**

When asked as to what they would photograph to show their school was Catholic, participants emphasised the 'what we do' aspect of culture. The celebration of morning prayers in school was frequently described as reflecting the Catholic nature of the school.

I think the first thing they [pupils] would say [is that we] have prayers in the morning in form and we have assembly prayers I really think it would come down to ...things they do.

(Jstaff fgi)

In all the Catholic schools visited the day would begin with prayer; often this would be in the form class before or after the morning register, or once or twice a week in a year assembly. The format varied from recitation of a formal prayer to a more informal time of reflection. In St Julian's the chaplain explained that she prepared resources for prayer to be used during this form time, and gave support to the non-Catholic form teachers. In general, participants valued the time of prayer.

Yeah you get the chance to pray for other people who need to be prayed for...It's nice to bring you together as one like just that one time.

(My9fgi)

Even people in our department who are non-Catholic and non-religious appreciate that time to think reflect even if they are not perhaps listening to the prayers and the readings...and I think the pupils appreciate...just that time...to reflect together.

(Jstaff fgi)

Students in St Margaret's also spoke of their own time of prayers, of being able to go the school chapel, 'at break times' or 'whenever you want' (My7fgi), to pray for the dead, or for those whose names were written in 'a book of remembrance', and 'a book of people that need to be prayed for' (My9fgi). In St Julian's a group of year 11 students had organised a prayer group for year 7 pupils and were planning to teach the younger students to say the rosary.

Some students viewed prayer as part of school life, and a sign of the Catholic nature of a school. One student explained his school was 'not as Catholic as some other schools, every lesson they have to do a prayer' (Jy9fgi). For other students prayer was not necessary to Catholicity.

Thing is...about praying...[you] don't have to pray to be a Catholic do you know what I mean. You [are] still a Catholic, a Christian not used to praying but doing good deeds, which is better than praying.

(Jy12fgi)

Another student in St Catherine's perceived that not all staff were supportive of prayers.

I know some teachers who never say [morning] prayers...Still like support the religion...they don't like say [morning prayers].

(Cy9fgi)

One of the issues with the morning prayers in school is that they are often not voluntary and so comparisons with the research on personal prayer are not possible. Morning prayers in school could be viewed as a means of teaching the young people about prayer, which may then develop into a habit of personal prayer (Stock, 2005, p. 14). However, other studies have shown that holding morning prayers needs collective agreement (Hermans, et al., 1999, p. 36), otherwise it loses status in school and becomes a meaningless ritual. Nevertheless for the majority of participants prayers in school were perceived as being a marker of the Catholicity of the school, something in which all members were expected to participate, and something not found in non-Catholic schools.

A unique feature of a Catholic school is the celebration of Mass. Some participants' responses, to the question of what should be photographed to show that their school was Catholic, focused on the celebration of Mass.

Mass...on a feast day we go in the Hall and have bread and wine.

(My7fgi)

Mass in the chapel.

(My9fgi)

Staff participants expressed the view that the celebration of Mass does not occur as often as it used to.

When I was at school...it was every Wednesday morning...we all had

Mass.

(Jstaff fgi)

St Margaret's had weekly voluntary Mass, although the head teacher argued they were only able to celebrate Masses because the local priests were still very

involved in the school, something he thought was quite unusual. St Catherine's celebrated a weekly voluntary lunchtime Mass, which was open to local parishioners as well. There the Masses were organised each week by a different form group; students were involved, doing the readings, taking up the offertory, and playing music for the Mass. Perceptions of attendance at Mass varied, the students in St Catherine's perceived that the Mass was always full, with people standing around the edges. However, personal observation showed that while people did indeed stand around the edge, there were nonetheless still several empty seats. The chaplain in St. Julian's stated that on a Holy Day of Obligation, a hundred to two hundred and fifty would attend a voluntary lower school Mass, out of a possible attendance of 750. However, one student's perceptions differed.

[The] masses [are] not well attended, remember the Mass we came in late and there was hardly nobody (sic) there...Do you remember we were late because we had science. (Jy10fgi)

A whole school celebration of Mass was very rare, although, students in St Catherine and St Margaret's both mentioned it. The students in St Margaret's felt that everyone sharing a celebration of Mass created a 'sense of community'.

I don't think it really matters 'cos some people are Catholic and some people aren't but when we have Mass we all join together.

(My7fgi)

However others found it a more negative experience, 'no-one likes it' (Cy9fgi), citing the crowdedness, and lack of respect from those who didn't understand. As a year 9 student explained a disadvantage of being in a Catholic school is that, 'it would be like if you don't believe you still have to go Mass' (My9fgi).

The recent document 'Instrument Laboris: The Eucharist' (Synod of Catholic Bishops, 2005) emphasised the importance of instructing young people in the respect for Eucharist, and the importance of Sunday Mass attendance. Yet, the celebration of Mass in school was for the most part seen as separate, different from Sunday Mass in the parish church. Some interviewees appreciated the opportunity to participate in Mass:

Mass in school is more interactive; he [the priest] asks people their opinion. (Cy9fgi)

This contrasts with Bryk's findings in the USA, where students still considered school Mass to be 'rather formal' (1993, p. 137). One student explained how he valued the celebration of Mass in school.

I volunteer for the Mass [in school] but I don't go to church...[I only go] once a year if I am lucky, but I go to Mass here and help if I can. Some people's family might not like encourage them to go to Mass or might not have enough time at the weekend but if they can go on [in school]...They can go without the pressure.

(Cy9 fgi)

For some students, school was the only place they celebrated Mass. In St Julian's the lay chaplain spoke to year 7 classes about the procedure and the meaning of the Mass, since like many staff she perceived that a majority of students did not regularly attend Mass, and did not know how to 'behave' in Mass. In her view it was important to develop Mass opportunities, so she had just introduced compulsory class Masses in year 7, and felt that this positive experience of Mass would bear fruit in their future time in school. This view is supported by Catholic

diocesan inspectors, who perceived school liturgies as ‘a dialogic induction into Catholic religious practices’ (Grace, 2002, p. 213).

A celebration of Mass in school was perceived by some to be a sign of an inclusive community, but for others it highlighted the differences within the school community. However, non-Catholics did participate in Catholic liturgy.

We all stick together we all go to Mass...some being Catholic and some being Protestant...but they have to go.

(My8fgi)

A member of staff in St Julian’s explained that she was aware that a celebration of Mass could be divisive as not all could receive the bread and wine, and it became obvious when people went up for communion whether they were Catholic or not. However, even non-Catholic staff supported the liturgies as ‘they are working in a Catholic school and have made that choice...part of the job description’ (Jstaff fgi). Previous research (Donlevy, 2006, p. 8; Egan, 1988, p. 100) has found that students and staff expected all in the Catholic school to support the Catholic liturgies.

Full participation in Mass is only possible in ‘a Catholic school with a homogenous population of Catholic pupils’ (Altena & Herman, 2003, p. 115). None of the three schools in this study had such a homogenous population. In these schools participation in the celebrations of Mass was taking place on a variety of levels: some were indifferent and unaware of the meaning of the ritual, some were attending from a sense of duty (Jstaff fgi), or, as ‘part of the deal’ of belonging to the school (Jy12fgi). On the other hand, as seen above others did



appreciate the celebration as it was the only time they celebrated Mass, and for some Mass in school did reinforce an experience of Sunday Mass. However, the majority of interviewees, whatever their attitude to the celebration of Mass, perceived it as a sign of the Catholicity and of the 'sense of community' of their school.

Participants' perceptions of the communal dimension of religion in school, reflect a perception of the Catholic school as a place marked out by Catholic artefacts, spaces and Catholic liturgies, both everyday form prayers and Mass. Students' perceptions of these as markers of their own Catholic identity are developed further in Chapter 7. The second half of this chapter explores another dimension of religion that many participants highlighted as reflecting the Catholicity of their school.

#### **6.4 Emotional Dimension: retreats and missions**

The emotional dimension of religion is defined by Hervieu-Léger (1998, p. 220) as the emotional experience associated with religious identity (see Chapter 2). For the majority of young people it is no longer a regular experience, but rather a moment of a primary experience of belonging. Hervieu-Léger identifies the emotional dimension in the experiences of young people at Taizé and on the Catholic World Youth Days (WYD). The three main activities described by interviewees that would give them the opportunity for an experience of the emotional dimension of religion were: the annual retreats offered to pupils and staff, the activities of the diocesan youth mission team in school and the

opportunity for a number of students to go on pilgrimage to Lourdes. These were all opportunities to experience the Catholic faith tradition outside the normal everyday routine of school.

All the schools offered students the opportunity to go on an annual retreat, this was usually organised in form classes and would be either a residential experience or a day retreat. Staff valued the retreats offered in their school.

[The pupils] on retreat to Holy Island...[are] bringing together the pastoral system, chaplaincy, and worship...for me definitely the retreats make the school quite proud of Catholic ethos.

(Cstaff fgi)

The Youth Mission Team were a group of young people employed by the Catholic diocese, who would spend a week in schools working with the young people, celebrating Masses with small groups or whole year groups. The school would usually spend the previous six months to a year undertaking various activities in preparation for the visit. The motto for the Mission that had recently taken place in St Julian's was 'Live Life to the Full' and the students often repeated this in interviews.

Although some of the staff participants did mention annual retreats and the Youth Mission Team, as signs of the Catholicity of the school, the students were more likely to mention the Lourdes pilgrimage as a sign of a Catholic school, for example 'going to Lourdes...showed that the school was Catholic' (My9fgi). This surprised me as all students had experienced retreats and the youth mission team, but in all the schools only a small number of students went to Lourdes. In the

course of the interviews I came to realise that many students did not view the retreat experience as something especially Catholic or even religious. As they attended these retreats usually in form groups, it was viewed as just another school trip. A member of staff in Julian's described one of the retreats as '...where they are having fun without realising they are doing something about the Catholic faith...' (Jstaff fgi). Student participants viewed these as activities for all members of the school community, not only 'religious' Catholics.

There is a difference between the young people's perceptions of pilgrimages, retreats, and mission and those of adults: the students focused on a 'sense of community' rather than a sense of individual spiritual fulfilment. One factor to consider is that all these interviews were group rather than individual interviews, and it would be interesting to follow up with individual interviews to compare with the group views. However, the difference between adults and young people's perceptions may result from the fact that for an adult pilgrimage or retreat, usually involves a personal decision taken in response to a desire to develop spiritually (Reader, 2007). Whereas, in the case of the students in school the decision to go on retreat or to take part in youth mission team activities was taken for them, and in some cases the whole form or year would go. For the students there was always the option not to go, but that had to be a conscious decision. Although the school authority and Catholic diocesan inspectors (Grace, 2002, p. 213) would view retreats as offering students opportunities for spiritual development, the participants did not perceive these experiences as a sign of the Catholicity of the school. Further research is thus required into the experience and understanding of retreats within the Catholic school system. Therefore there cannot be a

straightforward comparison between the experiences of adults on pilgrimage, retreats or in mission activities and those of the young people in Catholic schools. However, by contrast an exploration of student participants' views of pilgrimage does offer an insight into student views of the emotional dimension of religion and of their understanding of the Catholicity of their school.

## **6.5 Emotional dimension: the pilgrimage to Lourdes**

Following up the students' perceptions that the pilgrimage to Lourdes was a sign of the Catholic nature of the school, I interviewed a group of year 12 students in St Julian's who had been on pilgrimage the previous year and who were planning to return. The interview took place in the chaplain's office, where there was a montage on wall of photos from the previous year's pilgrimage. The students had taken part in an annual diocesan pilgrimage, as part of the group who helped the 'sick' pilgrims access all the activities in Lourdes. The chaplain had promoted this pilgrimage, and the school was the students' source of information, giving them help with their applications, while other members of staff accompanied them on pilgrimage. The chaplain had encouraged the students to apply, telling them the application forms were 'like gold dust' and only one of the students expressed the view that they would have gone anyway without the encouragement from the school chaplain.

The group of six year 12 students interviewed, identified themselves as being Catholic, although only two claimed to regularly attend Mass in a parish church. They were all active in the Catholic life of the school, helping with fair trade

work, or as members of the St Vincent de Paul (SVP) youth group. The young people had to fundraise to undertake the pilgrimage, but viewed this as part of the experience.

It is like that extends your holiday...as soon as you get back you have got yourself into fundraising for the next year.

(Jy12fgi)

Once in Lourdes, after an initial feeling of unease, the students involved themselves in supporting the sick pilgrims. This involved a variety of tasks.

It is whatever they [the sick] want to do...if they want to go to a Mass you take them to one...[or] if they want to go and get souvenirs for their family and stuff like that...

(Jy12fgi)

The students were aware that they were involved in something about which they did not know a great deal, although they 'did it [Lourdes] in year 8 [in RE]'. In the diocesan meetings held before the pilgrimage the story of Lourdes was retold, and they felt there that 'older generations seem to know more'. The students did not mention in any detail the story of Bernadette's visions or the miraculous cures associated with the shrine at Lourdes. When they arrived in Lourdes, the students knew little of what actually happened.

We were totally clueless the first time...we went. There was all this spiritual stuff going on and we really did not understand it until...half way through when we clicked on to the whole idea of it. [It wasn't] until the fourth or fifth day [we found] a load of taps that you can get holy water out of...[There is the] whole idea of underground masses...and how important that it is to some people.

(Jy12fgi)

The students' perceptions suggested that they were not undertaking the pilgrimage as fulfillment of their religious belief. The pilgrimage to Lourdes is similar to Catholic World Youth Days (WYD).

[WYD generate] a tremendous sense of being together, of being Catholic and not having to apologise for it...an experience that people have when they go to Lourdes. (James Hanvey Director of Heythrop Institute for Religion, Ethics and Public life, ii 2008)

Rymarz (2007) following Allen's (2005) criteria, argues that participants in World Youth Days (WYD) fall into three categories, the tourist, those unsure of their motivation and the committed. The motivations of the interviewees in St Julian's were not clear, they were neither tourist nor fully committed. However, the students perceived themselves as 'pilgrims', and were critical of others who sought to 'abuse' the place, by selling tawdry trinkets, or begging in the streets.

The students attempted to describe how 'different' the experience was and enthused about the atmosphere in Lourdes, and kept returning to the idea that 'you can't [understand]...unless you have been there'.

You can't explain it...just awe when you go...hard to explain it. You have to be there ...to understand. (Jy12fgi)

It is peaceful and calm...and awesome at the same time. It just takes your breath away at the same time. (Jy12fgi)

Their assumption was that everyone who goes to Lourdes will enjoy this 'atmosphere', and that it was for this they were returning. Their descriptions of

the activities and their experience of the 'atmosphere', suggest elements of the experiences of Taizé or World Youth days (Rymarz, 2007). Attempting to unpack this 'atmosphere' one of the students explains,

[There are] two sides the social and the spiritual, which do combine.

So if you go for the social side you end up becoming absolutely awestruck by all the spiritual things that go on and if you go for the spiritual side you meet so many amazing people...the whole is better.

It doesn't really matter for what reason you go because you end up...sharing the same experience of everyone.

(Jy12fgi)

The other students in the interview group adopted this division and described the spiritual and social experiences separately. For the students the spiritual side of the experience was about going to the Masses, a communal experience. There were several different types of Masses, 'just for our pilgrimage... for healing of the sick...aimed at youth...[and some] aimed at everyone' (Jy12fgi). They attended celebrations of Mass, because they wanted to.

[Going to Mass was] certainly not forced on you...they ask you to attend certain Masses and you do, but you find yourself going to them any way...you want to go and get involved in everything...You can opt out. You can stay behind and look after those who can't make it.

(Jy12fgi)

For students who did not normally go to Mass it was not easy.

Originally [it was] a bit difficult...you weren't used it [Mass]. Once you start going...[It was] a lot better than you think. If we didn't go to any of them [the Masses] the holiday wouldn't feel the same. They are

definite contribution to the holiday... a big part of it reminds you why you are there. (Jy12fgi)

Taking part in the celebration of Mass was perceived as being part of the experience, but also by celebrating Mass the students felt that they were part of something special.

It makes you look more closely at your religion and stuff like that 'cos if you ever question it just go there...and look at everything here and look at how many people at Mass... (Jy12fgi)

Mass was said in eight or nine different languages...that confirms your belief.

(Jy12fgi)

One student explained it would 'open [your] eyes to joining a group like [the Youth Mission Team]'. However, it did not give them the incentive to attend Mass more when they were back home; in fact it emphasised the difference between the celebration of Mass in Lourdes and their perception of the celebration of Mass in the parishes. Mass in Lourdes was an experience out of the ordinary with no immediate connection with the Catholic practices and beliefs they encounter in their everyday lives.

[It showed] a different side of religion as well. Lots of people think like if you say 'Mass' [they] roll their eyes...boring sitting in a church ...[it] showed you like how fun it can be.

(Jy12fgi)

They felt that these extra-ordinary celebrations of Mass were more accessible. They were involved in an experience that was relevant to them, unlike Mass in



parish church. This perception is based on what they thought Mass in the parishes was like, as the majority of the respondents were not frequent Sunday Mass attendees. Other interviewees had made similar comments about the youth mission team, (YMT).

When they [YMT} come in make you feel like you should be in church. But when you do go to church [there are] a lot more older people than young people...not the same when they come in [and] dance around. (Jy10fgi)

Alongside the spiritual side of the pilgrimage, was the social side.

Like you would hang out with the priests at night and [they would] just ...drink with us ...it is just like you wouldn't normally do that, it is just like the atmosphere...even in the restaurant eating world.

(Jy12fgi)

This sense of belonging, appeared to operate on at least two levels, at the micro level, they felt part of the small group of diocesan pilgrims. They spoke of being treated like equals by other adults in the party, eating and chatting with priests in the restaurant in the evenings. At the macro level, they felt they belonged to the global church, they commented on the number of people in Lourdes, the number of different languages spoken. They were with people who all shared a purpose, 'like you know everyone is there for the same reason' (Jy12fgi).

The students also spoke of a sense of personal fulfilment,

At the end of the week you do get a sense of fulfilment...it does make you definitely want to go back. (Jy12fgi)

It is strange during the week you are tired...you don't think you are enjoying till you sit down and you go 'Wow that was actually really class'.  
(Jy12fgi)

For the students it was the helping of 'those people', which gave them a sense of fulfilment. The students talked enthusiastically about the 'fantastic' people they met, and said that their time in Lourdes was not just a holiday but 'you know you are making a difference to someone else'. The students felt valued by the community for the work that they did.

[It was] very much emphasised in the meetings...you are told without us volunteering to go these people wouldn't get to go. You do definitely feel as if you [are] doing something for other people.

(Jy12fgi)

It was this side of the experience that they felt had the greatest effect on them when they returned, changing their attitudes to the sick and disabled, and to charity work in general.

[I was] not used to that many people who are ill...[I became] more open minded to people with disability and old people...and that will stay.

(Jy12fgi)

It is impossible to evaluate the effects of the Lourdes pilgrimage, and it is not clear whether the pilgrimage encouraged these students to reconnect to the Catholic Church in the long term. When asked about any long-term effects of their pilgrimage, the discussion immediately focused on more positive attitudes to the elderly and disabled.

The participants' description of their experience of pilgrimage emphasised the view of the experience of the religious, as an indescribable atmosphere, extraordinary, something that cannot be communicated. The interviewees perceived a distance between those who had gone on a pilgrimage and the rest of the school and felt that they could not communicate their experiences to their peers.

In this school we have grown up around RE lessons. [Yet] if I talk to people ...they don't have any awareness about religion ...or Lourdes.

(Jy12fgi)

Another student who did not attend Mass thought that most of her peers presumed Lourdes would be 'just going to be a load of masses every day'.

## **6.6 Reflections on participants' perceptions of pilgrimage**

Traditionally pilgrimages were spontaneous events, anti-authority and anti-structuralist, and a product of folk religion (Turner and Turner, 1978). However, this was not the students' experience of pilgrimage. For them pilgrimage is an experience that introduced them to previously unknown traditions of Catholicism. Hervieu-Léger (2001, p. 83) argues that the Catholic Church is using pilgrimages and World Youth Days as a form of emotional mobilisation, a socialisation of the young people into the traditions of the Catholic Church (see Chapters 2 and 11). Many religious institutions are promoting pilgrimages to holy sites, as a means of asserting their authority, (Reader, 2007, p. 219). The Catholic Church has used this technique in the past to revive traditional Catholicism, but it appears to be failing as people are undertaking pilgrimages without any need to engage with the religious tradition.

The students spoke of a sense of belonging at Lourdes, but Hervieu-Léger (2000, p. 176, 2001, p. 83) argues this sense of belonging and a deeper faith may only last for the time of the pilgrimage and may not translate into a stronger Catholic identity as perceived by the Church. She found that in follow up interviews with young pilgrims the sense of Catholic identity is lower than during the time of pilgrimage. The perceptions of the students at St Julian's suggest that they were not re-connecting to Catholic tradition, but encountering the Catholic tradition of pilgrimage for the first time. Although students perceived the Lourdes pilgrimage as a sign of the Catholicity of the school, it is not clear that the experience increased the attachment to the Catholic Church of those who went on the pilgrimage. The Lourdes pilgrimage was viewed as part of the Catholic faith tradition, without the perception of a need for a connection to the Catholic Church.

## **6.7 Conclusion**

This chapter has addressed the first of the research questions, and reflected on the ways in which participants viewed the Catholicity of their Catholic schools (this will be furthered discussed in Chapter 11). The participants described what they held to be the visible signs of the Catholic culture of the school; the crucifixes in the classroom; the school chapel; morning prayers and the celebration of Mass in school. An exploration of these perceptions gave an insight into the participants' experiences of the Catholic culture of the school. The second half of the chapter examined a more personal dimension of religion, namely, the emotional

dimension. This was explored through perceptions of events that took place less frequently in school, retreats and pilgrimages to Lourdes. This section revealed students' views of what is accepted as a very Catholic experience: a pilgrimage to Lourdes, a site of a vision of the Virgin Mary. The students view the experience as being 'out of the ordinary', and rather than reinforcing connections to Catholic tradition and practices, it appeared to emphasise a gap between these experiences and students' perceptions of 'everyday Catholicism' in school or in the parishes. The next chapter, Chapter 7 will address further this first research question. The Catholicity of the Catholic school is developed not solely through visible artefacts and activities, but through the religious identity of members of the school community. Chapter 7 investigates the Catholicity of the school through an exploration of participants' understanding of their own Catholic identity.

## **Chapter 7: A Catholic identity: the student ‘bricoleurs’?**

### **7.1 Introduction**

The previous chapter (6) examined participants’ perceptions of the visible signs of the Catholicity of the school. This chapter continues with an examination of the first research question, but seeks rather to investigate participants’ understanding of their own Catholic identity, an exploration that highlights a fragmentary understanding of the Catholicity within the Catholic school. An examination the Catholicity of the Catholic school cannot be complete without an exploration of participants’ perceptions of their own religious identity. It is a religious identity, which is both created by, and contributes to, the Catholic nature of the school. This chapter will begin with an exploration of religious identity formation and then a consideration of participants’ perceptions of their religious identity. These are explored through a series of vignettes, which reflect the views of some of the individuals involved in the group interviews. All the names used are pseudonyms. The final section will evaluate the students’ understanding of their Catholic identity.

### **7.2 Religious identity formation**

Before considering the participants’ responses it is important to consider an understanding of religious identity formation. An exploration of the religious identity of its members is valuable in an understanding of the Catholic school. The focus here is on the religious identity of the participants; it is an exploration of how they perceive their attachment to, or detachment from, the chain of

memory that is in Hervieu-Léger's argument the Catholic faith tradition. Religious identity formation, like national identity formation is a complex issue; at a cognitive level it involves knowledge of the group's history and beliefs, but also at an affective level it involves a sense of belonging and emotional attachment to a group (Barrett, 2000). Religious identity is not something that is solely transmitted, passively received, or handed down intact through the generations. The role of individuals in constructing their religious identity is acknowledged as important (Ammerman, 2003; Hervieu-Léger, 2000); young people are perceived to play an active role in constructing their identity whether religious, personal or national (Barrett, 2000; Loseke, 2007, p. 675). This construction of identity is a continuous process and results in a religious identity that is in flux; it is like 'a moving mosaic or a running river that twists through diverse nations and their cultures' (Niemi, 2006, p. 29). The understanding of identity as a process not an 'outcome' is supported by Nesbitt's (2004a) research on religious identity with young Sikhs and Hindus in Coventry.

The implication for this research is that the discussion that follows is limited to the participants' perception of their religious identity at a moment in time. These were also influenced by the circumstances of the interview process; the participants were interviewed in small focus groups within their Catholic school. Previous research (Nesbitt, 1998b, p. 196) has shown that the ethnographic interview may contribute to and facilitate participants' self-narration of their religious identity. According to self-categorisation theory all individuals have both personal and social identity and the context affects which identity they emphasise (Hogg, 1996). The fact that the interviews were group interviews

emphasised this social identity, rather than a personal identity. An expression of a social identity involves emphasising in-group similarities and accentuating out-group differences (Hogg, 1996). The possibility remains that, had the interviews been conducted with the individual or in a home setting, different responses would have been generated. However, as the focus of this research is on the Catholic school, it is important to consider how the participants' view their religious identity within the school setting and within their peer group.

In the following section, participants' own perceptions of their Catholic identity will be explored. Their descriptions of Catholic identity were very diverse. In the analysis of the interviews I decided to allow the students' own voices to determine the categories of identity, rather than compare their responses with categorisation by previous researchers in this field. I chose the responses of eight individuals that reflected this diversity, but these are only a selection, it would be impossible to include all the fragmentary understandings of Catholic identity expressed by the students. The written format necessitates a linear narration, but it is important not to view these identities as a linear scale, from, for example, a strong to weak Catholic identity. The participants did not appear to rank their views, apart from their designation of the 'hardcore' Catholic. The following table, on the next page, sets out the participants' understandings of Catholic identity, which will be explored further in this chapter.



| TYPES OF CATHOLIC IDENTITY | PSEUDONYMS | CHARACTERISTIC OF CATHOLIC IDENTITY                           | DIMENSION OF RELIGION |
|----------------------------|------------|---|-----------------------|
| ‘Hardcore’ Catholic        | Maria      | Sunday Mass attendance  | Communal              |
| ‘Baptised’ Catholic        | Alice      | Sacrament of Baptism  | Communal              |
| ‘Halfway’ Catholic         | Anna       | Disassociation from some Catholic Church teachings/ practices | Communal/<br>Ethical  |
| Catholic pilgrim           | Louise     | Lourdes pilgrimage  | Emotional             |
| Golden-rule Catholic       | Catherine  | Ethical values  | Ethical               |
| ‘School’ Catholic          | Peter      | School Mass Attendee  | Communal              |
| A Catholic atheist         | James      | ‘Belonging not believing’                                     | Cultural              |
| A Family heritage          | Jenny      | ‘Belonging’   | Cultural              |

**Table 1** Student’s descriptions of Catholic identity.

### 7.3 Maria<sup>\*</sup> - the ‘hardcore’ Catholic

Many of the participants expressed the view that they had to explain their understanding of Catholic identity with reference to what is referred to as a

---

<sup>\*</sup> all names are pseudonyms

‘practising Catholic’. A year 9 pupil in St Margaret’s discussed what he meant when he called himself a Catholic.

I’d describe myself as a Catholic but not a practising Catholic...A  
practising Catholic goes to church every week. (My9fgi)

Other students in this group sought to explain in more detail, referring to practising Catholics as ‘hardcore’ Catholics.

Boy: If you’re like a practising Catholic you have to do that...[go to Church]...like often.

Girl: [like] a **‘hardcore’** [Catholic].

(My9fgi)

She uses the same word later to explain why the school has been her main source of knowledge about Catholicism.

I just thought it’s nice to believe in God and to have something for  
life...cause me Dad doesn’t like...and me Mam isn’t really **‘hardcore’**  
Catholic. (My9fgi)

Some of participants referred to this type of Catholics as ‘religious’ Catholics, in attempts to explain how their Catholic identity is distinct from this type.

If you are ‘religious’ Catholic, you [will] actually...practise you [will]  
go to church, the majority don’t. (Jy12fgi)

However there were a small number of students in the Catholic school whose perception of their own Catholic identity fell within this ‘hardcore’ category, for example in the course of discussion with a group of year 8 students in St Margaret’s, Maria aged 12 explained what being a Catholic meant to her.

I go to Mass every week and have made my First Holy Communion...I have been brought up as a Catholic since I was little and...I lead the music there... If you go and sing at the church...afterwards at the back of the Boys Club you used to get free drinks and cakes...[but] I like going anyhow...I made a commitment to go to church every week. When we were in primary school in year six we [took part in] the May procession. All the girls were in their dresses. [Going to church] is like where you pray, you get together and you believe in God, [you] help each other, [and] celebrate Mass together.

(My8fgi)

Maria's contribution to the interviews was not typical of the majority of interviewees, but does reflect the views of some of the students within a Catholic school whose understanding of being a Catholic reflects that of the Catholic Church's definition, a key requirement being weekly Mass attendance. Researchers into Catholic identity refer to this type of Catholic as 'practising', 'core' or 'orthodox' (Francis, 2002; Fulton, 2000; Hoge, 2001; Rymarz & Graham, 2005, 2006); the key descriptors being regular church attendance and involvement in parish activities or Catholic organisations. In research on religious identity with young Lutherans in Finland, Hella (2006, p. 146) found that they made a similar distinction between those who lived according to their faith - 'real believers', and others.

### **7.3.1 'Hardcore' Catholic and Church attendance**

Maria's understanding of Catholic identity was closely connected with Sunday Mass attendance, and many participants made reference to this.

I think it [being a Catholic] is all about going to church and working together ...and taking the host. (My7fgi)

However, the majority of the participants in the interviews did not feel church attendance was important for them, or for Catholics.

...If you pray at home and if you pray at all then it means just as much as if you went to church. (My 9fgi)

I don't think [going to] church is needed to be Catholic...[because] you can be a Catholic...a good Catholic without going to church.

(Jy10/11fgi)

There was a view that only serious 'hardcore' Catholics would go to church every week. One student argued that he was 'not a really serious Catholic, like church every week but...church like some days...well, Christmas Day' (My9fgi). There was also a perceived need to defend their understanding of Catholic identity against the assumption that being a Catholic involved going to church. Participants argued that being a Catholic and going to church was something associated with the older generation.

[If] you go past a church at Mass time [it is] mainly old people going in.

(Jy1/11fgi)

Sometimes older people pressurise you...to go by their ways of thinking what a Catholic is [I] sometimes feel like...[they] force it on you...like the older people in the Catholic church you go to might have traditional views, old views on what it is to be Catholic.

(Jy10/11fgi)

This disassociation from the beliefs and practices of the older generation has been identified in other studies with young people (Andersen, 2010, p. 27; Hoge, 2002, p. 301). For the student participants disassociating church going from Catholic identity was quite acceptable. By rejecting the need to attend church, participants were not rejecting a Catholic identity, but were rejecting what they viewed as the older generations perceptions of a Catholic identity. This calls into question the role of church attendance as a marker of religious identity; traditionally it has been used as a marker of religious commitment in many academic studies.

#### **7.4 Alice\* - the ‘Baptised’ Catholic**

Having rejected Church attendance as a marker of a Catholic identity, many of the young participants in this research sought to explain how they defined their Catholic identity. Several of the participants made reference to the sacrament of baptism as defining a Catholic identity.

I would say I had been baptised...I would say I don't go to church, I am not really a strong Christian, I am just a Catholic.

(Cy9fgi)

A student in St. Julian's sought to explain that being a Catholic meant:

[Someone who] is baptised into the Catholic Church. [If you] don't believe in God, but have been baptised [you are] still Catholic.

(Jy9fgi)

The role of the sacraments of initiation in defining Catholic identity links in with traditional Catholic Church teaching and is reinforced in school by the Catholic schools' admissions policy. For all schools in this study the first category on the

---

\* all names are pseudonyms

admissions policy was for 'children who are baptised Catholics'. For the student participants the definition of a Catholic as someone who has been baptised appears to be a clear marker of Catholic identity. The participants' references were to 'having been baptised', not to being 'a baptised Catholic', baptism was something that had been 'done to them' in the past. It was their parents' decision, not something they had chosen to do. Students were aware of the admissions criteria for their schools (see further discussion in Chapter 10).

Alice (aged 14) explained why she had been baptised a Catholic.

Before I came to this school I had never been to church, [I] had to go to church for twelve weeks [and] had to get baptised to come to this school so...none of the people I know ...ever talk about Jesus.

(Jy9fgi)

The Director of Education in diocese A explained, being baptised as a Catholic can depend on the policy of the local Bishop or the local priest. He explained that for a child to be baptised in the Catholic faith, parents are expected to show commitment to the Catholic faith, one priest might interpret presenting the child for baptism as commitment, while another might require parents' regular attendance at Sunday mass over the period of a year. The appointment of a new parish priest in an area that served four Catholic schools resulted in the number of baptisms falling from 140 to 35 in one year. One implication of this is that if a student is baptised it does not mean that the family are practising Catholics.

Within the Catholic Church there are two other sacraments of initiation, namely, First Holy Communion and Confirmation. Several of the student participants

spoke of making their First Holy Communion and the preparation classes in year 3 in primary school. The variety of perceptions of, and attitudes to, the sacrament of First Holy Communion is well documented by McGrail (2007). However, although only one of the students spoke of the sacrament of Confirmation as a marker of Catholic identity, the lay chaplain in St Julian's expressed the view that the recent celebration of Confirmation, which had been organised through the school, had been very successful.

### **7.5 Anna\* - the 'halfway' Catholic**

Some students' perceptions were that being baptised did not make a person a full Catholic.

You have to be baptised to be a Catholic and...have taken Holy Communion at least once...[that makes you] a kind of... a 'halfway' [Catholic]. (My9fgi)

Many participants perceived themselves as not as Catholic as other Catholics.

I would not say I am a Catholic [because] some things I do believe in and some I don't, so I don't think I could class myself as a full Catholic...[just] a human ...a boy.

(Cy9fgi)

Some of the student participants often defined themselves as Catholic with reference to what they did not do or did not believe. This perception of not being a 'full' Catholic, did not imply that they would become a 'full' Catholic some time in the future, but rather they did not feel they measured up to what a

---

\* all names are pseudonyms

Catholic should be or do. This belief was linked with a disassociation from some of the Catholic teachings.

Many young participants in this research felt they could reject or accept the beliefs and teachings of the Catholic Church and that someone could be a Catholic if the person believed in God without accepting any of the rules and teachings of the church. In a discussion with a group of young people who were involved in the chaplaincy work at St Julian's, Anna (aged 15) explained that she had been baptised Catholic, and was a member of the school's St Vincent de Paul (SVP) youth group, which involved visiting an old people's home once a week and that she was hoping to go to Lourdes on pilgrimage with the diocese next year. However she argued that:

You can be a Catholic [because] you, I suppose believe in basic principles. But then there is other stuff you don't believe in...like what is called the Catholic...catechism...All that stuff in there - it's a bit...some things I don't agree with like abortion. I am for abortion, but I am still a Catholic...When I [hear about] abortion in church I block it out a bit. I still listen to their views, but I just know I don't agree with what they are saying.

(Jy11fgi)

The young participants had a very relaxed attitude to the authority of the Church, with regard to teachings and beliefs (see also Andersen, 2010, p. 35). Likewise in his research with young Catholics in the USA, Hoge (2002, p. 301) noted that many young people were dropping out of the Catholic Church over, for example, Church teachings on sex and did not perceive the teachings on sexuality as



binding. However, participants such as Anna\* did not see herself as having to abandon a Catholic identity because she disagreed with some of the Catholic Church's teachings on sex, but rather felt she was free to make her own mind up about the Church teachings.

## **7.6 Louise\* - the Catholic 'pilgrim'**

Some of the young participants described their Catholic identity by what they did, rather than by what they did or did not believe in. For example, Louise (aged 17) explained how she sometimes helped out the chaplain in school with the Fair-trade stall and that although she had been baptised Catholic, she had never really been to Mass until she went on pilgrimage to Lourdes the previous year. Louise intended to return again to Lourdes during the year of the interview and she had enjoyed attending Mass there (see further discussion of the Lourdes pilgrimage in Chapter 6). However the experience of pilgrimage did not appear to engender a closer connection with the Catholic Church. For Louise her Catholic identity was closely connected with the experience of the Lourdes' pilgrimage, but it did not involve attending church at home or accepting the teachings of the Catholic Church. Studies of young Catholics on pilgrimage (Hervieu-Léger, 2000) or in attendance at Catholic World Youth Days (Rymarz, 2007), have found many young people whose Catholic identity is also linked to an annual or one-off experience.

---

\* all names are pseudonyms

## 7.7 Catherine\* – the ‘golden rule’ Catholic

For many of the students a Catholic identity was about one’s behaviour to others. Consequently ‘helping others’ and ‘being kind’ were frequent responses. Catherine (aged 15) expressed similar views to many of the participants, when discussing how she would pass on the Catholic faith to her own children in the future.

[Being a Catholic is about] the way you live your life...you don’t need Church to lead your life. [All you need to know are the] Catholic principles of being nice to people and looking out for each other, being a good friend...love your neighbour. I think it is that we [Catholics] have Catholic principles, like common decency, be nice to people...Yeh everyone is willing to do that...

(Jy10fgi)

Other students spoke of these Catholic values and principles in terms of deeds not beliefs, such as ‘Jesus said love thy neighbour...[so] go out and be good’ (Cy9fgi). This idea was reiterated by many of the pupils, that being Catholic was about doing good deeds as opposed to going to church or praying. For many of the participants in the interviews it was this ethical dimension of Catholicism which they viewed as the most important, and it was this aspect of their Catholic identity that they would wish to pass on to the next generation. This idea of being Catholic as solely concerned with helping others, a view of Christianity, which centres on the Good Samaritan parable, is not unique to these Catholic students. It is a description of what Ammerman (1997) calls ‘Golden rule Christianity’; it focuses on doing good deeds as opposed to subscribing to a set of beliefs. Other research

---

\* all names are pseudonyms

(Rymarz & Graham, 2006, p. 377; Williams & Davidson, 1996, p. 285) has suggested that many young Catholics expressed the view that being ‘nice to people’ and being a ‘good person’ made someone a ‘good Catholic’. It is a view of religion as ‘right living’ rather than ‘right believing’ (Ammerman, 1997).

## **7.8 Peter\* – the ‘school’ Catholic**

For some of the participants the school was the only place in which they expressed a Catholic identity. For example Peter (aged 14) explained how he did not attend a parish church.

I sometimes go to Mass [in school] to talk to Father...Last year I spent a lot of time talking to [the chaplain]. [I would] just go in for a bottle of water...I volunteer for the Mass [in school] but I don’t go to church...I would just come straight out with it, “I am Catholic but I don’t go to church”, [because my] dad married my mum [and she is] Protestant so can’t go to Mass, but I go to Mass in school. [I] don’t think that is fair...not [to] make people welcome [because] of who they married...Why can’t Protestants go to church?...[I] don’t see what the difference is.

(Cy9fgi)

Although Peter’s personal circumstances might be unusual, it was evident that many of the young participants were very unlikely to attend church by themselves, if their family did not attend, but they did feel they could attend Mass in school. Peter regarded Mass in school as more relevant and accessible than Mass in church. This perception of the difference between celebrating Mass in

---

\* all names are pseudonyms

school and attending church has been discussed in Chapter 6. An important point is that for the young people there was a clear distinction between celebrating Mass in a parish church and the Masses held in school. It is questionable as to whether Peter's perception of having a Catholic identity will survive outside a school environment.

### **7.8.1 Reflections on the role of the Catholic school in creating a Catholic identity**

The role of the Catholic school in creating a Catholic environment, a sense of Catholic community and in transmitting the faith tradition is discussed in other chapters namely Chapters 6, 8 and 9. Young people construct their identity through telling and listening to stories (M. Leonard, 2006, p. 1118) and the Catholic school is a place where beliefs and stories of Catholic identity are the accepted 'norm'. The school provides the memory of the tradition, which is not found outside school. For any identity to be maintained there is need for a supportive network and the Catholic school provides a level of supportive Catholic network through social peer groups (Rymarz & Graham, 2006, p. 373). The role of school in defining students' religious identity has been noted elsewhere. For example Nesbitt (1991, p. 31) quotes a Ravidasi girl who defined herself as Sikh as her teacher had told her that this is what she was, (see also Jackson & Nesbitt, 1993, pp. 162-163). The very fact of being in a Catholic school results in identification as Catholic or non-Catholic, a distinction of identity that might not be made visible in a non-Catholic school. (Further discussion of the role of the Catholic school in defining Catholic identity is found in Chapter 11).

## **7.9 James\* – the Catholic atheist?**

All the participants in the above categories thought of themselves as Catholic, and they attached themselves to some recognisable Catholic beliefs, or practices. However, the participants who placed themselves in the next category detached themselves from all Catholic beliefs and practices and yet viewed themselves as having a Catholic identity.

[The school] should branch out a bit more as what we have got mainly is Catholics and atheists [and] I don't know anyone who is not Catholic. (Cy9fgi)

The majority of participants in the interviews were baptised as Catholic and even when they disputed all teachings, beliefs and practices of the Catholic tradition they did not describe themselves as non-Catholic. An outsider might well describe them as an atheist, but the young people still saw themselves as Catholic. This separation of belonging from believing was also found by Hella (2006, p. 147) in her research with young Finnish Lutherans. It is possible that the young participants are identifying themselves with the majority; it is known that a minority group will sometimes seek to identify with majority (Milner, 1996, p. 258). They are using the term Catholic, as it is how the majority of participants in the school identified themselves but it appears as an empty concept for them. Another possibility is that for many of these young people being a Catholic was about having an identity, which did not entail believing or doing anything. Instead it concerned 'belonging without believing', rather than Davie's 'believing without belonging' (1994). In other research Andersen (2010, p. 27) found that for many young Catholics religion was not important in their lives. This echoes what

---

\* all names are pseudonyms

Rymarz and Graham (2006, p. 374) found in their research in Australia, where ‘being a Catholic is not seen as a big deal and as such does not evoke a strong response, either positive or negative’. There was no evidence that the Catholic beliefs and teachings had been replaced by other forms of spirituality, a finding that reinforces that of Andersen (2010, p. 31) in Ireland.

### **7.10 Jenny\* – the family heritage**

Traditionally religious and faith identity has been transmitted and nurtured by the family and many young people perceived being Catholic as a family identity. For example, ‘they are Catholic because [they are] born to it’ (Jy12fgi). Jenny\* (aged 14) explained that she was baptised a Catholic, that she did not believe any of the Church teachings and that she was not involved in any Catholic activities in school, but that she would always call herself a Catholic:

[because] it’s a family thing Mum and dad tells you ...[so] I was  
brought up as Catholic. (My9fgi)

Other participants expressed similar views of the close connection between their Catholic identity and their family.

This family tradition did not necessarily involve a holistic transmission or nurturing of Catholic practices and beliefs. The parents’ role in transmission of the Catholic faith tradition has been explored in other research studies. Hervieu-Léger (1998, p. 215) argued that often that parents had doubts about ‘the very importance of religious transmission’, believing that a child’s ‘right of choice’ justified their refusal to act as ‘agents of transmission’. Rymarz and Graham (2006, p. 371) point

---

\* all names are pseudonyms

out that if the parents are not involved in a religious community, then it is increasingly unlikely that the children will be. The participants in this study could simply be reflecting the practices of their families (Rymarz & Graham, 2006, p. 372). Some of young participants in this research made reference to grandparents when discussing the transmission of Catholic beliefs and practices rather than their parents. A year 9 student at St Margaret's explained that she knew she was a Catholic as her grandmother insisted they had fish and chips on Fridays. Some explained how their grandparents were active in their local church.

My granddad...[does] candles and things in church...[he] really enjoys it.

My grandma helps around the church of St. X.

(Jy8/9fgi)

The role of grandparents in the transmission of a faith traditions has been highlighted in other research with young people (Arweck & Nesbitt, 2010). It would be an interesting area for further research to explore the relations between these young people and their grandparents' religious identity.

The majority of these Catholic families do not find themselves within a strongly bonded Catholic community, (see Chapter 1) although for some of the young people there still exist some vestiges of Catholicism as a communal practice. For some of the young participants in this research church attendance was associated with family celebrations of Baptism or First Communion, or attendance at the main Christian festivals. Rymarz and Graham (2005, p. 59) identified a similar communitarian pattern with the young people involved in their research in Catholicism. The identity of the majority of Catholic participants was not

associated with belonging to a wider Catholic community. This is perhaps not surprising given the changing identity of the Catholic community in England (see Chapter 1). McGrail (2004) has highlighted a much narrower understanding of the Catholic community, with a focus on regular Sunday Mass attendees as the Catholic community, such an understanding of the Catholic community would exclude the majority of the young Catholics in the Catholic schools studied and many of their families. (Chapter 9 will consider the ‘sense of community’ within the Catholic school).

### **7.11 The non-Catholic in a Catholic school**

The few participants, who did explain that they were not Catholic, invariably meant that they were a member of another denomination or faith tradition. A year 7 girl in St Margaret’s explained that she was a Protestant:

I am not a Catholic, I think they believe in God and Jesus and all. We don’t know what we believe in. (My7fgi)

One of the group interviews in St Julian’s focused on students who were active in the chaplaincy group in the school. This group helped with preparation for Masses and with Fairtrade stalls, in the course of the discussions John\* (aged 15) explained that he was not Catholic, but a member of the United Reformed Church. He saw no conflict between this, his involvement in chaplaincy activities at St Julian’s, and attendance at the voluntary Masses in school. Likewise, Malik\* (aged 16) a year 12 Muslim in St Julian’s also attended Mass in school. He explained that, even though he had been given permission not to go, he saw it as

---

\* all names are pseudonyms



‘part of the deal’ of attending a Catholic school. For the Catholic students, there was little awareness of the non-Catholics within school, as personal religious beliefs were not discussed, Donlevy (2006, p. 2) found a similar lack of awareness in Canadian Catholic High schools.

## **7.12 Reflections on constructions of Catholic identity**

A clear conclusion from this analysis is the diversity of the students’ views that have been exhibited. This ranges from the traditional Catholic as a weekly attendee at Sunday Mass, to the Catholic who shares no recognisable beliefs and practices. This range of views is often hidden if a Catholic is defined as someone who has undertaken the sacraments of initiation. From the above views of the students in my research it can be seen that their understandings of their Catholic identity were not easily classified into practising, or non-practising. Many of the markers of identity employed in quantitative research (Curran & Francis, 1996; Francis, 2002; Francis & Egan, 1993) did not appear relevant to the participants’ understandings of Catholic identity. Leslie Francis (2002) in his studies into the attitudes of students in Catholic schools divided them into four main categories: active or practising, those who attend church every Sunday; sliding those who attend church some Sundays; lapsed Catholics who never attend church; and non-Catholics. These categories are based on the criteria of church attendance, it was only for a minority of the students in my research that church attendance was relevant to their Catholic identity. Francis’s categories of ‘sliding’ and ‘lapsed’ would include the majority of the students in my research, yet within those categories as seen in the above descriptions there is a variety of understandings of

Catholic identity. The value of qualitative ethnographic interviews was apparent in my research, as the participants were able to define their own understanding of Catholic identity. It would be an interesting line of research to construct a quantitative instrument informed by these qualitative findings.

Various researchers have attempted to rethink the categories of Catholic identity. In his research with young adult Catholics, Fulton (2000) divided his Catholic participants up into 'super core', 'core', 'intermediate', and 'former' Catholics. The 'super core' Catholics were those involved in Church organisations and activities beyond Sunday Mass attendance, 'core' Catholics were those who regularly attended Sunday Mass. 'Intermediate' Catholics were those who attended occasionally, even as seldom as once a year, and 'former' Catholics were those who now disassociated themselves from Catholicism. Rymarz (2006) uses Fulton's divisions in his work with young people in Australia. However, he defines a 'core' Catholic as a young Catholic who fulfils two out of three of the following: attends church, has a parent involved in parish activities or is involved in other Catholic activities. Although Rymarz and Graham found (2005, p. 381) that often the only practice that marked out 'core' Catholics was Sunday Mass attendance, there was no evidence of participation in Catholic organisations. Fulton (2000) and Rymarz's (2006) divisions of Catholic identity are still too rigid to encompass the variety of responses of the participants in my research. Very few of my participants could be defined as 'super core' or 'core' Catholics and few would fall into the category of 'former' Catholics. Yet the 'intermediate' category would include a variety of responses from regular attendee at school Mass, to someone whose definition of being a Catholic was 'being nice to

people'. The diverse understandings of Catholic identity shown in my research suggest that the participants are creating their own understanding of Catholic identity.

Hervieu-Léger (1998) uses the term 'bricolage', to describe this construction of a religious identity (see Chapter 2). However, her description of six types of Catholic identity: aesthetic, emotional, humanist, humanitarian, patrimonial and political did not provide an adequate framework to include the diversity of views expressed by the students in my research. The construction of a Catholic identity from fragments of the Catholic tradition exemplifies an issue that all religious traditions face at a time of change; determining what is essential and what is optional (Hoge, 2002). The majority of participants interviewed in this study showed no awareness of a need to respect the authority of the Catholic Church institution or a general acceptance of having to subscribe to set a beliefs and teachings to identify yourself as Catholic. The term that is often used to refer to these Catholics is the usually disparaging 'cafeteria Catholic' (Hoge, 2002, p. 295). Some of the young people in this study did define their Catholic identity in a negative manner, describing themselves as 'halfway' or 'not full' Catholics. Nesbitt (2004a) found a similar differentiation in her research with young Punjabis in Coventry, who differentiated between Sikhs and 'proper', 'real', 'pure' or 'true' Sikhs. The young participants felt they had a right to their understanding of a Catholic identity, or as Hervieu-Léger describes it a 'right to bricolage'. It is important to acknowledge the value of the students view: it is not just a 'paler reflection' of Catholic identity, but 'different in kind' (Ammerman, 1997), (see further discussion in Chapter 11).

To what extent the young participants were positively constructing a Catholic identity or simply rejecting aspects of Catholicism was not measurable within this research. In his research in Ireland, Inglis (2007) speaks of ‘creative Catholics’, namely, those who are active in creating their religious identity, bringing in elements of other faith traditions or popular religion. There was little evidence amongst the participants in my research, of creating a Catholic identity by bringing in new elements; with the exception of one student who complained that her mother wouldn’t let her carry out Wicca rituals involving candles in the house. (See Chapter 11 for discussion of the role of the Catholic school in defining a Catholic identity).

### **7.13 Conclusion**

This chapter has explored participants understanding of their Catholic identity. It has identified eight types: the ‘hardcore’, ‘baptised’, ‘halfway’, ‘pilgrim’, ‘Golden rule’, ‘school’, ‘atheist’ and ‘family’ Catholic. These types are not rigid, some participants may belong to more than one, and their understanding will vary given a different time or place. However, these insights are valuable as they highlight the need for flexibility in defining a Catholic identity, and the value of listening to young people’s views of religious identity. The next chapter, Chapter 8, will address the second research question, examining the ways in which the Catholic school ensures transmission of the faith tradition. It considers an area highlighted by participants, as being a sign of the Catholicity of their school, namely the Catholic values and principles that underpin the

Catholic ethos of the school. It will also explore the students' perceptions of the transmission of the faith tradition within the Catholic school.

## **Chapter 8: ‘Catholic’ values and the transmission of Catholicity**

### **8.1 Introduction**

The previous two chapters explored perceptions of the Catholicity of the Catholic school, Catholicity reflected in physical signs, activities and individuals’ views of their Catholic identity. This chapter addresses the second of the two research questions investigating the ways in which the Catholic school ensures transmission of the Catholic faith tradition. It explores the less visible, and the intangible elements, that contribute to the Catholicity of the schools. The first section of this chapter considers the understanding of transmission or socialisation employed in this research. The next section explores the values that the participants viewed as contributing to the Catholic ethos of the school. This is followed by an examination of perceptions of two means of transmission of the faith tradition within the Catholic school: curriculum Religious Education (RE) and the ‘Catholic’ staff. The final section considers the role of the Catholic school in the transmission of the faith tradition.

### **8.2 Theoretical reflections on the transmission of the faith tradition**

Transmission of faith tradition to the next generation is the basis of a religion: without it the religious tradition will not survive (Hervieu-Léger, 1998, pp. 216-

217). It is a dynamic process, and cannot be separated from socialisation into the faith; the terms are often used together in both positive and negative contexts. Thus John Hull (2004) refers to 'mere transmission, an initiation into conformism and passive acceptance,...a kind of religious socialization, the school being the agent', while Eleanor Nesbitt (2009) describes religious socialization for Sikhs as 'the inter-generational transmission of Sikh faith, values and culture'. Traditionally, socialisation was about a passive transmission (Vermeer, 2010, p. 105), with an active transmitter and passive recipient (Hervieu-Léger, 1998, p. 214). It is now viewed more as 'a dynamic, interactive and lifelong' process (Vermeer, 2009, p. 204). Research in childhood studies supports the view that young people are active agents in constructing their identity and in interpreting the past (M. Leonard, 2006, p. 1119).

Hervieu-Léger (1998) argues that the transmission of a faith tradition is always in crisis and it is in the dynamic of the crisis that the faith tradition is transmitted to the next generation. The Catholic Church has traditionally ensured transmission through the family, the parish and school. Thus a Catholic school forms part of the transmission process. It has an 'inter-generational function' (Vermeer, 2009, p. 203) to ensure affiliation to the faith. The Catholic Church holds that the aim of a Catholic school is 'to nurture intellectual faculties and the induction of children into the religious heritage bequeathed to them' (McClelland, 1996, p. 159), thus it should play a crucial role in ensuring the young are socialised into the faith tradition. The Catholic Bishop's Conference of England and Wales (1996, p. 7) maintains that Catholic schools are involved in catechesis, evangelisation and

religious instruction, understanding catechesis as ‘the process by which the faith of believers is nourished and education.

The understanding of the Catholic faith tradition employed in this research is not restricted to that defined by the institutional Catholic Church. It includes students’ understanding of themselves as part of that tradition (Meijer cited in Jackson, 2004b, p. 93). This widens the understanding of faith tradition, but also narrows it in so far as it excludes elements such as the Marian tradition not mentioned by participants. This next section will explore the intangible atmosphere, ethos, and values that participants understood to define their school as Catholic. Many of the participants highlighted elements of the ethical dimension of Catholicism (Hervieu-Léger, 1998, p. 219) as making a major contribution to the Catholicity of the school. The ethical dimension concerns the individual’s acceptance of values connected to a religious tradition (see Chapter 2). The living out of ‘values through word and action as method of transmission’, is often referred to as an essential role of the Catholic school (Coll, 2009, p. 202; Grace, 2002). The transmissions of values within a school contribute to students’ socialisation (Vermeer, 2010, p. 108). The idea of the Catholic ‘atmosphere’ that permeates the schools is explored first, and this is followed by a consideration of the participants’ description of Catholic values reflected in their school: the atmosphere, friendliness, respect, discipline, trust and Catholic principles.

### **8.3 ‘It’s the atmosphere’**

[It is nothing to do with] material things ...I think it is more like an  
ethos or something. (Jy12fgi)



This section focuses on participants' perceptions of the ethos of the Catholic school. A frequent comment from staff in Catholic schools is that there is something different about Catholic schools, 'you feel it as you walk in the door'.

I taught in both non-Catholic and Catholic schools and I think there is a wonderful atmosphere you don't get in a non-Catholic school.

(Jstaff fgi)

Any attempt to unpack this perception posed difficulties, as there was a lack of clarity in the participants' responses. This 'atmosphere' was something the majority did not appear to have reflected on. Another factor that made it difficult was the participants' lack of experience of other schools. They slipped between discussing what was a characteristic of their school and what they felt was characteristic of Catholic schools in general. However, there was one short discussion between a group of year 9 students about the Catholicity of their school compared to other local Catholic schools, where they concluded that their school is not as Catholic as some they knew. The assumption that their school represented all Catholic schools is understandable given that most student participants were speaking from knowledge of only two Catholic schools, their present school and their primary school. In some cases even the staff had limited experience (or indeed no experience) outside the Catholic school system. A Catholic member of staff at St Julian's stated at the beginning of the interview that he found answering questions about the distinctive nature of the Catholic school posed some difficulty.

I went to a Catholic school, did both my [teaching] practices at a Catholic school... don't ...know any difference.

(Jstaff fgi)

This lack of experience of other school structures and ‘atmospheres’ for the majority of the participants must be taken into consideration when analysing their attempts to describe the values that underpin their school ethos.

In trying to discover what the participants meant by the unique atmosphere, it is relevant to examine what is understood by the term ‘ethos’. Ethos is a significant factor in the education of students. It is frequently described in terms of atmosphere and is manifested in many aspects of school life (McLaughlin, 2005, p. 309). A traditional view of ethos was something imposed from on high; something determined by those in authority and transmitted to all participants (Donnelly, 1999). This research is working from an understanding of ethos, as created by an interaction of all participants.

[It is a] unique pervasive atmosphere or mood of the organisation which is brought about by activities or behaviour, primarily in the realms of social interaction and to a lesser extent in matters to do with the environment. (Allder [1993] p.69 cited in Donnelly, 1999)

#### **8.4 The values that ‘animate’ the Catholic ethos**

This next section considers four elements that participants identified as contributing to this Catholic atmosphere, or ethos in their schools. Shared values are the ‘normative glue’ that holds the community together (Court, 2006, p. 235); they are what ‘animates’ the ethos (Eisner [1994] cited in McLaughlin, 2005, p. 310). The four values described here are the friendliness of the school, the respect for all members of the community, the discipline, and the level of trust between members of the school community. The

values described are not in themselves especially Catholic, Christian or even religious, and could and do occur in many non-faith schools. Yet in the context of this research in these Catholic schools, the participants identified them as being characteristic of the Catholic atmosphere or ethos of their school.

In two different schools, staff described the ‘friendly’ atmosphere, which they understood to be a characteristic of their school.

As a new member of staff...in terms of the time for others being very very strong here, especially just among the staff...having a word in the corridor...how things go that is just part the ethos of a Catholic school. (Jstaff fgi)

Everyone is friendly...wants to join in...[there is a] strong senses of shared values [it is] not just the children ...[also the] staff. [You can] walk down the corridor people say hello to you...[In] other places that does not happen. (Cstaff fgi)

Bryk (1993, p. 278) has highlighted this sense of friendliness amongst the staff as a characteristic of a school that views itself as a community. In his research, Bryk noted ‘collegial interactions’ in both academic and social fields, that is to say an attitude amongst staff towards cooperating in the academic realm as well as an engagement with other staff outside formal school hours (see Chapters 9 and 11).

Students also expressed a perception of a Catholic school as a friendly school. They sought to explain that this was not some idealistic view, and admitted they were aware that everyone was not friendly all the time, and even good friends fell

out sometimes. Two different groups of students described the image of a family to explain what they meant.

You know when friends mix like a Venn diagram ... Form class don't [always] get on, but...like a family, [you] might not like them all the time but you always stick by your form.

(Jy10fgi)

Everyone knows everyone. Everyone is friendly...more civil, everyone trusts...[it is like] brothers and sisters, cousins like family.

(Cy9fgi)

To some extent, this family image was a reflection of the fact that many students had siblings and cousins in the school and the parents of some children had attended the same school. However, it also summed up for the students a community in which people were there for each other. This perception of friendliness and the idea that 'everyone knows each other' is surprising considering the size of the schools: both St Catherine's and St Julian's had more than 1500 students. Although it was apparent that the students did not know even all the members of their year group, the majority of participants perceived that they belonged to a small friendly community (see Chapter 9).

Along with the idea of a 'friendly' school, was the view that every individual within a Catholic school was respected. There was mention of respect between staff, between students and by students for staff and by staff for students. A member of staff in St Julian's argued that this level of respect for each other was more pronounced in Catholic schools.

The amount of respect that members of staff have for each other and the amount of support they have for each other is really...really it is tangible, and you do get that in non-Catholic schools, but it is not to the same degree...it is not as evident.

(Jstaff fgi)

The staff and students also spoke of respect for the leadership in the school. Students in St Margaret's not only explicitly said that they thought their head teacher was a 'good leader', but in interviews they frequently quoted what he had said to them about the value of academic success, and the idea that the school was 'a community'. The students also described an atmosphere of respect, not just respect for authority, but also respect for each other, and the teachers' respect for them.

Well everybody respects each other...Respect the teachers, the environment...Respect the individuals...People listen to you when you put your hand up.

(Jy9fgi)

The students perceived that they were taught respect and that the teachers respected them. However, students felt they were not always respected, and a student argued that although the teachers say they respected the students' individuality, 'when someone tries, like wears nail varnish, they make them take it off' (Cy9fgi). These perceptions of respect within the school focus on other members of the school community, but respect for those outside the community was not mentioned as a characteristic of the Catholic nature of the school.

The students and staff held an idea closely linked to the idea of respect, that somehow discipline was different in Catholic schools.

...You are not just teaching about Catholicity - it is about how you should behave to each other. (Jstaff fgi)

It's more very like fair discipline... [I] think there is definitely a Catholic twist when you get disciplined for doing something wrong. There is a sense [you] shouldn't be doing it because of ...all faiths could be saying [you] shouldn't be doing [it]...like a religious twist ...that's what I mean, not the methods of teaching.

(Jy12fgi)

Morris (1998) suggests that the discipline system in a Catholic school is different as it derives its ethos from Catholic teachings on forgiveness. The discussion centred on the idea that discipline in their school was fair, that students did not get punished unnecessarily, were listened to and given another chance. A member of staff in St Catherine's highlighted this aspect of fair discipline, and the school's emphasis on giving students a second chance. He stated that if he was to take a photograph that symbolised the Catholic nature of the school, it would be a picture of the 'reintegration unit' at the front of school.

[It is] fundamental to the Catholic ethos. The staff put a lot of effort into students...who have broken and damaged lives. 'Every Child Matters' sums up [the] ethos of school. As part of its pastoral concern the school really tries to show ...genuine concern for others, [the] mission statement [is] explicit...the root and foundation of what we are, [is to] look at dignity of the person.

(Cstaff fgi)

In the reintegration unit within school, students were educated individually for a short period of time, before they were gradually reintroduced back into a normal timetable, and thus given another chance to remain within the school. All schools in England are expected to adhere to the government policy of 'Every Child Matters' (Department for Children Schools and Families, 2010), yet the staff perceived it as a reflection of the Catholic ethos of the school. The staff in all the Catholic schools visited, perceived the pastoral care system as an example of the Catholic values of the school in action.

The perception that somehow the discipline in their school was stricter than that found in other local schools and that it was good for students, was a common theme in all three schools.

[It is all about]...the strictness of the teachers...[in] state schools the discipline there isn't as good. (Cy9fgi)

However, this was perceived as an advantage.

[There are] more rules, more discipline [and this is] good [because] otherwise you would just go off the rails...[You] get better grades. (My9fgi)

For students the consequences of this fair discipline system were the good academic results they expected to achieve. They felt that their Catholic school had a good reputation, and so they were proud to say they came from their school.

Better reputation for people's education, Catholic schools have better influence on children, [the school has the] best results in [local education authority]. (Jy9fgi)

A group of year 9 students in St Margaret's explained that the head teacher was always telling them that their 'GCSE's were a passport to their life'. The head teacher himself argued that the focus for too long has been only on the pastoral side, and traditionally this view had come into conflict with the idea of academic achievement. He argued that the modern Catholic school had to balance the pastoral with a focus on achievement, 'the "search for excellence" model of education is also a gospel imperative' (M head teacher ii). Morris (1997, 1998, 2005, 2010) has researched the connection between Catholic schools and academic excellence in great depth, and this will be explored further in Chapter 11.

The fourth value that participants highlighted was the concept of trust. There was a shared perception that you could trust anyone who belonged to 'your' school.

[It is] like you can just leave your bag in corridor and no one will touch it, like trust kind of thing, we all do trust each other.

(Cy9 fgi)

Trust is an important element in the development of a 'sense of community'. This perception of the level of trust amongst people within school was closely linked to the view that there were others outside of it that you could not trust. Some of the students in St Catherine's discussed the idea that they felt that in school they were in some sort of bubble. There could be too much trust because once outside school they had to remember not to trust people so much.

Other schools aren't brought up in our environment [and] exploit our trust when we leave...in [our] school. [It is] like a barrier cut off from the rest of the world. You can trust people [here].



(Cy9fgi)

The perception of trust and a lack of trust will be further explored in Chapters 9 and 10. Friendliness, respect, good discipline and trust are not values unique to Catholicism, yet the participants in all the schools felt that these were characteristic of a Catholic school and would either not be found at all, or to such a degree, in other schools. The next section will explore how participants sought to explain these values as being Catholic values.

## **8.5 Catholic principles**

The participants stressed the Catholic nature of these values or principles, although they seemed to slip between a description of Catholic, Christian and Gospel values. It would be an interesting exercise to explain the different definitions of Catholic, Christian, or Gospel values, but for the participants they were interchangeable, although one member of staff did argue that the values were Christian values as opposed to particularly Catholic ones.

I think it is [nowadays] more Christian values rather than...passing on  
of the Catholic faith that is just from my own [experience] from when  
I was at school. (Jstaff fgi)

In St Catherine's a member of staff referred to the Christian values, which were the basis of school ethos.

I think...[the] school motto, ['In this way let your light shine'] shows  
Christian values. [It is] what the school is about

(Cstaff fgi)

Other staff spoke of the staff or the school as living out Gospel values. Other research has noted the use of the term 'Gospel values' by Catholic head teachers (H. Johnson & Castelli, 2000) and in the mission statements of Catholic schools (Grace, 2002, p. 127). Both staff and students perceived that the Catholic school transmitted Catholic values. A member of staff spoke of 'the way that we inculcate values in our children' (Jstaff fgi). For year 9 students in St Catherine's the development of these values was visible in the change in behaviour apparent in some students. They explained that while there might be some year 7 students who behaved like "charvas" (i.e. were rough and unpleasant), by the time they were in year 9 they all behaved much like everyone else.

An analysis of the perceptions of the Catholicity of these values has proved challenging, as the perception of the ethical dimension of religion tends towards an expression of universal values. All of the values described and activities associated with them would, could, and possibly should be found in all schools. The importance of values education in a variety of forms is recognised in many schools (Arweck & Nesbitt, 2007, p. 313; Hawkes, 2009). An interesting theme found in many of my participants' responses was that these values were especially Catholic, or found in a greater depth in Catholic schools. There was a lack of recognition of the universality of the ethical values. Both the staff and the students perceived that these values were linked to the Catholic faith tradition. This could be because this was the faith tradition of which they had experience, or because of their lack of experience outside the Catholic school system.

An aspect of this view is that it emphasises differences; it constructs a boundary between themselves and ‘outsiders’, a secular society that was perceived to lack these values. The conflict or dissonance between a faith school’s values and those of secular society has been explored in Zine’s (2001) research with Canadian Islamic youth, and Schoem’s (1982) research in a Jewish afternoon school (cited in Court, 2006, p. 237). Participants in my research held the view that the values in their Catholic school were different from those of the secular society, yet analysis of these values suggests they would be shared by many sections of society. The next two sections of this chapter will explore the participants’ perceptions of the transmission of the Catholic values and of the Catholic faith tradition.

## **8.6 Religious Education**

A faith school has two main ways of transmitting the faith tradition, namely through an introduction to a ‘specific body of knowledge’ and through a ‘living representation of the faith tradition’ (Vermeer, 2009, p. 207). The first part of this section considers the former, curriculum Religious Education (RE) as an introduction to the Catholic faith tradition; the second part will examine the ‘living representation of the faith tradition’ in the form of the staff in the Catholic school.

For some staff and for many students RE in the school was what made the school Catholic.

I really think it would come down to [the fact that] we have RE lessons ...things they do. (Jstaff fgi)

[We are] just a 'normal' school apart from RE.

(Jy9fgi)

It is like compulsory to do RE ... wouldn't have to do that in [a] non-Catholic school. (Jy12fgi)

These perceptions were not usually based on students' personal experience of non-Catholic schools, but on assumptions, such as '...other schools...don't do that much RE lessons because they don't believe in it that much' (My9fgi). Some students who had knowledge of non-Catholic schools sought to correct this, for example by saying that 'some [other schools] do teach RE as I've got a friend who lives down my street who gets RE taught to him [and it is] not a Catholic school' (My9fgi). The Catholic schools' focus on RE was not welcomed by all students, as shown by one year 9 student's question:

Why three RE [lessons per week]? I am never going to be the Pope.

(Cy9fgi)

For the students RE was learning about Catholicism. One reason for the perception of a close link between Catholicism and RE is the connection between the Catholic Church and curriculum RE (see Chapter 1). It can be clearly seen in an extract from the Self Evaluation Form (SEF), that the school had to complete before a diocesan inspection, where the school must evaluate 'how far the Religious Education curriculum meets external requirements of the Catholic Bishops' Conference and is responsive to diocesan circumstances.' The close connection was also apparent in a year 7 lesson observed in St Julian's, in which

the students were studying aids to Christian worship. The lesson began with a review of the previous lesson on the creed, and the teacher asked the students 'Why do **we** say that?' and the response of one of the students was '**we** are saying what we believe in'. The use of 'we' and 'us' occurred frequently in the lesson. Part of the lesson involved students in groups moving around the class to examine aids to worship such as prayer books, rosary beads or a statue of the Virgin Mary. Some of the students' responses, such as '[rosary beads] help us pray', or '[statues make] us feel safe', revealed a sense of a shared faith, a perception of themselves as 'insiders'. There are always limits to observations and it would have been interesting to follow this with individual interviews of students, to explore to what extent they viewed themselves as 'insiders'.

Students in these Catholic schools perceived RE as being confessional.

[A] defining feature of confessional RE is its assumption that the goal of the subject is to nurture faith and that its contents, and the development of curricula and teaching materials, are mainly the responsibility of religious communities as distinct from the state.

(Jackson, 2008b, p. 7)

Vermeer (2010, p. 103) argues that RE has an important contribution to make to the socialisation of the student. However, this is not a passive activity, but one in which participants are active agents (Vermeer, 2010, p.107). There is evidence that some of the students perceived themselves to be active agents, in their reflections on the difference between the teaching and learning of RE between Key Stage 3 and 4. This perception might not only have been affected by the

teaching in those years, but also by changes in their maturity and attitudes to learning. Nevertheless their perceptions of RE at Key Stage 4 are relevant here.

[In] year 10 [you] learn loads more...about...catechesis [and] you develop your own ideas about stuff in year 11...In year 11 [you] learn about *your* faith. (Jy11fgi)

The emphasis here on ‘your’ gave the impression that what the speaker meant was the chance to discuss issues in class offered her the opportunity to clarify her own beliefs, “her faith”. As another student in the group went on to explain.

Your opinions change...a lot in year 11, when you are learning about the things the Catholic Church believes in...Compare other years in High school when you just learn the basics of religion...[You are] taught about them, you don’t really form your own opinion, but come year 11 you have that maturity so you start to have your own ideas anyway...You are given both sides of the argument and then you start to form your own opinion.

(Jy11fgi)

This group of students perceived RE at Key Stage 3 as being about learning or being told information, while at Key Stage 4, GCSE examination RE was seen as being more about time to develop their own opinions of Catholicism. It was apparent that the students appreciated the opportunities to express their opinions about Catholicism. In general the participants presented a positive view of RE in their schools, and this contrasts with the attitudes described by Egan (1988) in her research in Catholic schools in south Wales in the 1980s.

It is interesting that these students held the view that they had a right to form their own opinions about the beliefs and teachings of the Catholic Church. RE was seen as an opportunity to discuss and debate moral issues such as abortion, euthanasia, and contraception, to learn the Catholic teaching on the subject and then form their own opinions. For some students disagreement with this teaching meant they would not consider themselves Catholic, whereas others stated they were Catholic, but did believe in abortion and contraception (see Chapter 7). Previous research (Grace, 2002, p. 226; Scholefield, 2001, p. 47) has found that disagreement with Catholic Church teaching on sexual morality is not uncommon. This attitude to the authority of the Catholic Church is also not unique to these students. For example, Hoge (2002, p. 301) concludes from his research that ‘young Catholics had a vision of Catholicism which included less church authority and less rigid boundaries than was the case with older Catholics’. The students show evidence of reflexivity (Jackson, 2004b, p. 88). They appeared to be reflecting and reassessing their beliefs, through an encounter not with another religion, but with their own faith tradition. This perception of RE as ‘reflective transmission of culture’ (Meijer [2006] cited in Vermeer, 2010, p. 115), or in other words a dynamic process that students can engage with is discussed further in Chapter 11.

## **8.7 ‘Catholic’ teachers**

The role of the Catholic school as an introduction to a ‘living representation’ of the faith tradition is considered in this next section, through participants’ views of teachers within the school. The perception that RE teachers were different, that

they needed to share the faith to be able to teach it was common amongst many of the participants.

If teachers aren't Catholic how are they going to teach RE?

(Cy9fgi)

A similar discussion took place amongst year 9 students in St Margaret's.

Well, some RE teachers might need to [be Catholic]... so that they know what they are talking about when they teaches (sic) us it.

(My9fgi)

A year 7 student in St Margaret's school felt that RE teachers had to be Catholic.

You can't really teach a religion that you are not in ...you need to ...It is more peaceful if you live it.

(My7fgi)

Although another member of the group disagreed: 'I don't really think...it matters [if] they still know what Jesus is and what Jesus [has] done' (My7fgi). The idea that teaching about Catholicism, was more than just instruction in religious matters, rather it was a 'lived' faith, reinforces the perception of the confessional nature of RE. Other research studies (Astley, Francis, Wilcox, & Burton, 2000) have shown that RE teachers in Catholic schools do give greater emphasis than teachers in non-denominational schools 'to the confessional aim of promoting a religious way of life' (see Chapter 11 for further discussion). For the majority of the students RE teachers were not teaching about Catholicism, but rather they were seen as teaching "their" religion.

The Catholic Church in England holds the view that teachers of Religious Education have an important role in faith development of the students in school.



As the then Archbishop of Westminster, Basil Hume, wrote in the preface to the Curriculum Directory 'teachers of Religious education, together with parents, need to lead young people towards an ever increasing understanding of faith' (Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, 1996). Amongst the participants in this research all teachers - not only RE teachers - were perceived to play a role in transmitting the Catholic faith tradition. After a student argued that the teachers were Catholic in 'the way they teach', other students discussed this.

Don't they have to be Catholic? I thought they did.

[The] majority have to be Catholic ...

Teachers do teach in a very Catholic way.

(Jy12fgi)

Some students perceived that some of their teachers were more Catholic or religious than others.

...Higher up staff pressure them to put the religion on us (sic)...My [registration] teacher, if he sees the head of year coming down, he will say a prayer but normally wouldn't do that...[he is] not particularly religious but still supports everything.

(Cy9fgi)

Other students had not previously given much thought to the faith of their teachers.

Some of the teachers don't express their own views...I don't know any of the religions of the teacher. We are not ... yet shown that.

(Cy9fgi)

However, the general assumption amongst the majority of the student participants was that teachers were Catholic or at least supportive of the Catholic ethos of the school.

On the other hand, a Catholic member of staff expressed the view that,

An increasing number of staff are not Catholic, I think it [the school] is changing in that direction as well. (Jstaff fgi)

In Catholic schools in England it is no longer a requirement for a teacher to be a practising Catholic, the exceptions being head teachers and RE teachers (Bishop M. McMahon, 2009), and there are an increasing number of non-Catholic members of staff within Catholic schools in England. Catholic teachers' understanding of their Catholic identity is changing (Coll, 2007, p. 461). Head teachers' view teachers from other Christian denominations, as often being more supportive of the ethos than 'lukewarm or nominal Catholics' (Grace, 2002, p. 262). The changing religious identity of staff in Catholic schools will impact on the teachers' understanding of their role in transmission of the memory of the Catholic faith tradition (see Chapter 11 for further discussion).

The teachers themselves did not speak of a role in transmitting Catholicism. Rather as one member of staff explained, it was 'more [about] instilling ...Christian values' (Jstaff fgi). However, the lay chaplain in St Julian's did consider part of her role to be transmission of the Catholic faith tradition. The chaplain stressed the importance of ensuring the 'correct' transmission.

[It is a challenge where people have the] greatest of intentions but not the correct transmission. I think that where we have a huge problem... can you call yourself a Catholic if you have a pick and mix faith?

(Chaplain ii)

She spoke of the guidance she was giving some year 11 students who were wishing to start a prayer group for year 7 students and of the need to catechise them to ensure the right transmission. Students spoke positively of the work that the lay chaplain undertook, the liturgical activities organised, the encouragement of involvement in charity work with Fair Trade or the St Vincent de Paul society, and the 'being there' if they needed to talk with her. She was a gateway to Catholic Church activities such as the Lourdes pilgrimage. The role of a lay chaplain in a Catholic school is a fairly new concept and the duties of the chaplain vary from school to school (Catholic Education Service, 2005), but they are seen to have a vital role (Hanvey & Carroll, 2005). They are important means of representing the institutional Church in Catholic schools.

Adult participants in the research at St Julian's and St Catherine's were aware that the priest did not have such a visible presence in the school as in previous times.

I don't see the local priest in as much as when I was at school ...[if there was a] stronger influence [there would be a] stronger relationship.

(Jstaff fgi)

The head teacher of St Margaret's explained how fortunate he was to have the local clergy still very involved in his school as '[there is] difficulty in getting a priest in most schools to say Mass even on a Holy Day of Obligation'. Most

students did not mention the priest or any involvement of the religious orders when discussing the Catholicity of the school.

## **8.8 The Catholic school: the sole means of transmission**

The exploration of the means of transmission of the Catholic faith tradition within the Catholic school raised the issue of the perception of the Catholic school as the sole means of transmission. In discussions it became apparent that the school had played a major role in transmitting a knowledge and understanding of Catholicism for some students.

...Dad's Catholic but I don't think he has been to church ever in ... 30 years. Me (sic) Mam wasn't even christened so it is probably the school that has told me what I believe and everything.

(My9 fgi)

Yeah the school has taught me everything I know about religion.

(My9fgi)

The view that for many students in Catholic schools, the school is the sole source of knowledge of the Catholic faith has been expressed many times. Grace (2002, p. 223) found this view commonplace amongst the head teachers involved in his research, in so much as they argued that 'the Catholic secondary school is the living Church and parish for its young people'. Some of the staff interviewed expressed a similar awareness of this role for the Catholic school, and felt that it was increasingly becoming a challenge.

I think a lot of the children are not practising Catholics and...an increasing number of children are not from homes that [have] any sort of Catholic influence in them at all...That presents problems on its own when you are trying to pass on 'the thing'.

(Jstaff fgi)

A member of the RE staff in St Catherine's foresaw a future in which the school was 'going to have to be the Church, it will be the only contact...the whole school parish partnership won't exist...' (Cstaff fgi).

Parents were not perceived as being active in transmitting the Catholic faith.

[The parents] see us as some kind of substitute, something they want...their children to have but they themselves have lost touch with what it actually is ...

(C staff fgi)

Similarly in her research in Australia Freund (2001, p. 11) quotes a teacher referring to the faith of the parents, 'they're as Catholic as they need to be to get a kid into here'. Freund argued that the parents' commitment to Catholicism was a 'form of social capital' and a way of ensuring a good or better education for their child. The faith element is often not seen as an important issue for parents (Vermeer, 2009, p. 202). The views of the parents were beyond the scope of this research; therefore we can only discuss the perceptions of the parents by staff. These suggest that for some parents the Catholic school is fulfilling a vicarious role, (see Chapter 11), in so much as they wished the school to give their child a Catholic education, but they themselves did not wish to become practising Catholics. It would be an interesting area of research to compare Catholic parents' perceptions of faith schools with Levitt's (1996) research in Cornwall, which

disclosed the views of the parents in a Church of England school, whose general opinion was that religion was ‘nice when they were young’.

The implications of school as sole transmitter of the Catholic faith tradition are far reaching. The dimensions of the Catholic faith that can be transmitted within a Catholic school on its own are not the same as a transmission of the faith tradition through a combination of family, parish and school. The extent to which a Catholic school is able in isolation to transmit the faith tradition as a ‘lived religion’ is questionable (see Chapter 11 for a more detailed discussion of this issue).

## **8.9 Conclusion**

This chapter has explored the values and principles that contributed to the Catholicity of the school. Participants identified four main values, friendliness, respect, discipline and trust that animated the Catholic ethos of the schools. The perception that these values were connected to the Catholic faith tradition and present to a greater degree in Catholic schools raised the issue of whether such a perception contributes to a view of a boundary between members of the school and secular society. The Catholic school was seen as playing a role in transmitting the Catholic faith tradition, through curriculum RE and the Catholicity of the teachers in school. The role of the Catholic school in transmission of the faith tradition is not the only factor in its reception, it is also affected by the ‘dynamics of believing and the shifting external environment’ (Hervieu-Léger, 1998, p. 217).

The next two chapters examine the view of the Catholic school as a community; Chapter 9 considers the bonds that hold the community together, while Chapter 10 explores the boundaries of these school communities.

## **Chapter 9: The Catholic School: a ‘sense of community’**

### **9.1 Introduction**

The previous chapter examined the second research question investigating the ways in which the Catholic school aimed to transmit the Catholic faith tradition. This chapter addresses research question 3, exploring the ways the Catholic school forms a cohesive community. A community is defined not only by a ‘sense of community’, but also by perceptions of its boundaries. Boundaries are an essential element of any community, they mark the beginning and the end (A. P. Cohen, 2007, p. 12) and are not fixed but ‘relational’ (2007 p.58). The perception of the boundaries of these Catholic schools will be explored in Chapter 10, this chapter will focus on the ‘bonds’ that hold the Catholic school community together. The first section examines briefly the concept of community, this is followed by an exploration of the ‘sense of community’ within the school: the social interaction, shared values and Catholic nature of the community. The final section examines two themes, which developed out of the participants’ responses namely 1) that a ‘sense of community’ is better generated in Catholic schools than other schools and 2) that the school community is (to a large extent) a Catholic community.



## **9.2 Theoretical understandings of ‘Community’ and a ‘sense of community’**

To fully comprehend participants understanding of the concept of community, it is necessary to explore relevant definitions of the concept. These next two sections 9.2 and 9.3 will explore the theoretical background, while section 9.4 begins the investigation of the participants’ perceptions of community. There are numerous definitions of community and it appears to have no single fixed meaning (Parker-Jenkins, et al., 2005, p. 64). Thus, the concept of community is much debated, and much contested. It is used both as a description of a group of people sharing a common purpose and also as something of value, a desired quality. The myth of ‘community lost’ has influenced much of the discourse on this topic since Tonnies (1887) described the evolution of society from ‘Gemeinschaft’, the traditional village community, to ‘Gesellschaft’, the fragmented community of the industrial city. Cohen (2007, p. 116) argues against the idea of evolution of society and suggests that both could be found together in any one society. Tonnies’ work has been adopted by some who emphasise the loss of this ‘sense of community’ (G Smith, 2004) and by others ‘to make sense of the quality of life in schools’ (Sergiovanni [1994] cited in Pomson, 2009, p. 23). A desire to return to a ‘sense of community’, or to view community as beneficial, underpins much of the more recent research in this topic employing the concept of social capital (see Chapter 3), and is found in much of the political discourse on this subject (G Smith, 2004, p. 188). Coleman and Hoffer’s (1987) research in Catholic schools in the USA focused on the value of community and its contribution to the effectiveness of Catholic schools.

A community can be defined by geographical location, by ‘solidarity’ or by social interaction (G Smith, 2004). Rowe (1992) identifies six types of community to which people might belong in their lifetime: family, kinship, affiliation, school, state and world (Levin, 2005, p. 141). The American sociologist, Bellah defined community as:

A group of people who are socially inter dependent, who participate together in discussion and decision-making and who share certain practices. (2007, p. 333)

This chapter focuses on the way the term ‘community’ is used by the participants, namely, what it means to be a member of a community as defined by its members (A. P. Cohen, 2007, p. 20). A ‘sense of community’ can only exist in the minds of individuals (Hermans, et al., 1999, p. 38).

Research (Osterman, 2000, p. 6) has shown that a desire to feel part of a community has its roots in the human need for a ‘sense of belongingness’. A ‘sense of community’ or a ‘sense of belongingness’ or ‘community’ are not always necessarily the same. A ‘sense of community’ is based on subjective feelings, sentiments and traditions which bind people together (Driscoll, 1995, p. 219). Religion provides one mode of belonging in the face of the modern fragmentary society (see chapter 2, Hervieu-Léger, 2000; Levin, 2005, p. 140).

[Religion] offers community in the face of the often functional and faceless structure of the state.

(Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks [1993] cited in Levin, 2005, p. 140)

Community is viewed as important by faith schools, which appeal to this need to belong (Levin, 2005, p. 141). In fact, Pomson (2009, p. 25) suggests that community is the *raison d'être* of the Jewish day school.

The perception of a 'sense of community' is affected by many factors. For example the fact that participants do not rate a high 'sense of community' within a school may be affected by their level of self esteem or by the fact that they gain more support and identity from other communities to which they belong (Pretty, 2007). Participants' positive affirmations may also be linked to the method of focus group interviews; individual interview might have produced less positive descriptions of a 'sense of community'. The next section outlines a Catholic view of the concept of community.

### **9.3 Catholicism and the concept of community**

The concept of community is a key feature of Catholicism; it is through relations with others that the human being develops as a person. Thus, 'the dignity of human persons is achieved only in community with others' (Hollenbach, 1996, p. 95). The Second Vatican Council highlighted the social teaching of the Catholic Church and the understanding of the social nature of the person.

For by his innermost nature man is a social being and unless he relates himself to others he can neither live nor develop his potential.

(*Gaudium et Spes*: 12 cited in Hollenbach, 2005)

To understand the Catholic concept of community; an understanding of the concept of the person in Catholic theology is essential. This is based on the

theological idea as expressed in *Lumen Gentium* (1964) that all Catholics are part of a mystical body (Morris, 1998, p. 92). There is a crucial difference between the concept of the person and the individual; the latter contains the idea of separateness, whereas, the Catholic concept of person contains the idea of relatedness.

Every person born, formed and nurtured grows in relationship to other people...our 'sense of community' is not one of a collective of individuals but a community of mutually dependent persons.

(Nichols, 2007)

In this sense, the concept of community is an essential element of Catholic doctrine. A person is only fully human in their relationship to other people. For the Catholic school this 'sense of community' is an integral part of the Catholic ethos of the school. The Catholic school needs to reflect community, not simply as an ideal taught but as a value realised (Covey [1992] cited in Groome, 1996, p. 115). Part of this 'sense of community' derives from belonging to the Catholic community. Morris (1998, p. 92) outlines the characteristics of a Catholic community. It is a community, which has a distinct set of beliefs, values and behaviour, including for example: attendance at Mass on Sunday; expectation of lifelong marriage; and rejection of abortion and euthanasia; beliefs about the nature of God; Christ's death and Resurrection. The next section examines the participants' perceptions of their school community, before a consideration of its links to the Catholicity of their school.

## **9.4 A ‘sense of community’**

The phrase ‘we are a community’ arose first in a discussion with a group of year 9 students in an RE classroom at St Margaret’s near the beginning of my fieldwork. In the moments before the end of the lesson, students were discussing the purpose of my research, and what was special about their Catholic school; several students indicated that it was because ‘we are a community’. It is important to try and unpack exactly what the participants understood by the concept of community. Their responses suggested a perception that ‘community’ was something that was of benefit to them, although a few students did highlight what they felt to be the disadvantages of a strong community (see Chapter 10). This next section considers the three main areas distinguished by the participants: that of social relationships between members of the school, for example that the school was a community ‘where everyone knew everyone’; that their school was a community that was characterised by shared values; and that the school was a ‘Catholic’ community.

### **9.4.1 ‘Everyone knows everyone’**

A common perception shared by many of the student interviewees was that their school was a place where ‘everyone knows everyone’ (Cy9fgi). Two groups of interviewees used the image of the extended family to describe the ‘sense of community’ in school.

[It is like] brothers and sisters, cousins like family.

(Cy9fgi)

One year 10 student in St Julian's explained that it was like a community with a 'family feel' (Jy10/11fgi). This view of the school as like a family was often accompanied with the idea that their school was a friendly school (see Chapter 8). The 'sense of community' was not just amongst their peer group but extended to relations with teachers.

All the teachers are really nice to you...really friendly.

(My7fgi)

In conversations with the students there was a view that the teachers cared for the students' well being and knew them each as individuals. This perception of being a small community where everyone knows everyone was very strong even though the students admitted elsewhere that they did not know all the staff or even all the students in their own year group. What is important here is that the participants share a perception that their school community is characterised by close relationships between all its members. As W.I Thomas (1928) argued what people believe to be real is real in the consequences for them (A. P. Cohen, 2007, p. 8). To understand further how the participants viewed the 'sense of community', it is useful to consider the values and attitudes that the participants viewed as contributing to this 'sense of community'.

#### **9.4.2 Attitudes and values**

The 'sense of community' was perceived to be fostered by attitudes of respect, trust and care for each other (see Chapter 8). Many participants mentioned this.

I think the community aspect is a big issue...the way people relate to one another and the amount of respect that members of staff have for

each other and the amount of support they have for each other is really really is tangible. (Jstaff fgi)

The student participants reiterated this idea of respect for all members of the community; one group's response to what held their school community together was 'well everybody respects each other' (Jy8/9fgi). In addition to the idea of mutual respect was the perception that everyone cared for each other and 'they help each other' (Jy10/11fgi). The other attitude that was emphasised by participants was the idea that as a community members trust each other.

We all do trust each other...[in] school the majority of [people are] Catholic we got the trust, [if] you get people coming in from a rough background you don't know if you can trust them.

(Cy9fgi)

In other research Bryk et al (1993) has claimed that trust is a characteristic of the school as a voluntary community, arguing that the Catholic school is a voluntary community with communal organisation, a high degree of autonomy, and clear admission and expulsion policies. Grace (1996, p. 78) argues that the latter policies are fundamental 'to the nature of the Catholic school as a community' (see further discussion of admissions policies in Chapter 10). Catholic schools could be viewed as voluntary communities with a perceived shared set of beliefs, traditions and values, to which the adults involved, both staff and parents, had made a deliberate choice to belong (Bryk, et al., 1993, p. 128). However, the Catholic schools involved in this research are not true voluntary communities, in that the majority of their members, namely the students, have not made their own choice to attend, and in the majority of the schools do not participate in any

meaningful way in discussions and decision-making. Yet, many of the participants interviewed in this research did feel that their Catholic school was a community, and that this was a positive aspect of their school.

#### **9.4.3 ‘Catholic community’**

The ‘sense of community’ perceived by many of the participants was linked to the idea they were a community of Catholics and part of the wider Catholic community. Participants described the whole school celebrating Mass, or going to Church. For example the majority of the focus groups in St Margaret’s spoke of the whole school walking to Mass in the local Church; giving the impression that this was a frequent occurrence. However, the head of RE explained that the whole school went only once a year to the church, on the school saint’s feast day. It was in St Margaret’s that formal links with the wider Catholic community were most apparent and close ties with the local parish church and priests appeared to be maintained. All students visited two of the local Catholic churches every year, and each Friday a priest came in to the school to celebrate a voluntary Mass. The head teacher expressed the view that the town itself was very ‘traditional Catholic’, he gave the examples that the local Catholic churches still held a Corpus Christi procession and the churches would be full for Benediction. This sense of being a community of worshipping Catholics was linked into an understanding that their Catholic school was part of a wider Catholic community.

When we go to Mass not just us who go up...instead of just the school  
anyone who wants to can come in and share the Mass with us...It is]



not just a school community...[it is]...a Catholic community...all  
[those] outside school can come in and share what we believe in...

(My7fgi)

The head of RE explained that this was not so; that given the size of the school the Mass was only for members of the school, although governors and support staff who attended might have been unknown to the year 7 students and presumed to be outsiders.

Some participants linked the 'sense of community' to the perception that all or the majority of members of the school community were Catholic,

[It is] more like a community than a school...although I am not a Catholic myself...that is the kind of thing most people have in common.

(Jy12fgi)

You are...in your own [Catholic] community...[it is your] own special community with people who believe in the same thing.

(Cy9fgi)

We are a group of people with the same beliefs about Catholics.

(My9fgi)

The perception that everyone was Catholic was often contradicted within the same discussion group and although the students expressed a view that they were a Catholic community, they were also aware that not everyone was Catholic. The teachers expressed a clear awareness that not all staff were Catholic and referred to students as not being 'churched'. By this they acknowledged that the majority of students were baptised as Catholic, but recognised that many were not practising churchgoers. Students and teachers' perceptions of the differences

between Catholics and non-Catholics focused on the celebration of Mass and they explained that you could tell who was not Catholic, as they would not receive communion. Although all stressed the 'sense of community' included all members of the school.

St Julian's, as mentioned in Chapter 6, did not have its own local parish Church or chapel space and few references were made to local Catholic parish churches. However, students were aware of diocesan-wide events such as celebrations of Mass or the pilgrimage to Lourdes. In St Catherine's once a week a voluntary school Mass was held, attended by pupils, staff and members of the local parish community and the staff explained the school invited the local Catholic parish into school for organised liturgies such as at Easter. This opening of the Mass to the Catholic community beyond the school was very important in reinforcing the perception that the school community was part of a wider Catholic community.

As an example of being part of the wider Catholic community, the majority of the staff mentioned the charity fundraising and volunteering that took place within school. Charity work was not confined to Catholic charities; money was raised for other charities such as the local hospice. Older students were involved in more political, or social action fundraising, for example for Amnesty International or, in one school, a 'Free Burma' campaign. Several members of staff when asked what they would photograph to show the Catholicity of their school described the charity work or the Fairtrade stalls.

I think I would do it when they do Fairtrade stall outside on an Friday  
break time. (Jstaff fgi)

A picture used at the start of lesson of the orphanage...[the chaplain]  
sends off for one child in an orphanage that is quite a powerful image,  
which could be used. (Jstaff fgi)

In St Catherine's charity fundraising and volunteering also had a high profile. The lay chaplain in St Julian's suggested that the Fairtrade work in school was an excellent example of 'faith in action'. She described how a few sixth formers were responsible for organising Fairtrade stalls, designing posters, and there were approximately 60-70 year 7 and 8 students also involved. Fairtrade work gave an opportunity for a large number of students to be involved, although the students did not see the Fairtrade work as 'as living out the Gospel' (Jchaplainii). These views of charity work and volunteering emphasised the doing good rather than 'civic engagement', this is however, the case in many schools (Annette, 2005, p. 198).

For the staff interviewed the charity work in school was a powerful image of the Catholic nature of the school, and of the school's involvement in the wider community. Previous research (Bryk, et al., 1993; Engebretson, 2009b; Scholefield, 2001) has shown that Catholic schools value community service work as part of the Catholicity of their schools. Since the Second Vatican council the Catholic Church has put great emphasis on social justice programmes (Bane, 2005; Engebretson, 2009b, p. 202), and in the schools there was some evidence of this in the involvement in Fairtrade and Amnesty campaigns, but this was not mentioned by the student participants as examples of Catholicity. The student participants in my research did not view any charity work, or volunteering as contributing to the Catholic identity of the school. One explanation could be that,

given their limited experience outside the Catholic sector of education, they presumed that this level of charity fundraising took place in all schools. Di Giacomo (2007) recognised that a danger for Catholic schools was that students would view involvement in community service as ‘secular humanism, without any faith dimension’ (Engebretson, 2009b, p. 203). The staff viewed the charity work as involvement in the wider community and a sign of the Catholic nature of their schools. In contrast the students saw charity work as neither an example of the Catholicity of the school community, nor signs of being part of the wider community.

## **9.5 The role of the school hierarchy in promoting a ‘sense of community’**

Near the end of my time in St Margaret’s school I remarked to the head of RE on the numerous discussions I had had with the pupils about the school as a community, and she pointed out that the head teacher frequently used the phrase ‘we are a community’. When discussing the factors that held their school together as a community several of the interview groups replied ‘the head teacher’. The students stated that the head teacher often spoke to them in assembly about being a ‘community’, sharing with them his concerns about their future, and stressing the importance of doing well in school as being ‘their passport to life’ (My9fgi). Several of the participants spoke with pride about future plans for the school that the head teacher had shared with them. This understanding of the role of the head teacher as being the ‘glue’, that held them together was also found by Bryk et al (1993) in the Catholic schools in the United States.

We heard the claim “we are a community” repeated often, accompanied by an awareness that the role of principal was to ‘foster a sense of community’. (1993, p. 275)

The head teachers in Johnson and Castelli’s (2000, p. 84) research constantly emphasised the idea of the ‘school as a community’. One of the factors in the effectiveness of Catholic schools has been head teachers’ ‘involvement outside the confines of the school’ (Morris, 2010, p. 89). It has been recognised within educational research that the head teacher has a role in developing, leading and maintaining community in all schools (Sergiovanni [1992] cited in Dewey, 2009; Morris, 1998, p. 88).

The relationship of staff with students, and also amongst themselves, is another important factor in generating this ‘sense of community’. Staff in all three schools spoke of the good relationship with other members of staff, even down to the value of an acknowledgment when passing in the corridor. Students thought that there were good relationships between staff, even though one student in St Margaret’s suggested that they could not possibly always get on with each other, but the teachers ‘pretend to get on in front of us’ (My9fgi). Bryk et al (1993) had identified a sense of collegiality between staff as being crucial to the effectiveness of the Catholic school. Grace (2002, p.147) noted in his research that an increasing number of head teachers were advocating a more collegial style of leadership.

It has been suggested that Catholic teachers who are committed to Catholic culture will choose to work in Catholic schools, and their involvement with the

Catholic community outside the school will further enhance their commitment to the Catholic school (Morris, 1998, p. 100). However, the personal religious identity of the teacher will affect their involvement in such activities, both in Catholic schools (Hermans, et al., 1999) and outside the school (this is explored further in Chapter 11). The belief within the Catholic schools, involved in my study, was that the head teacher and staff maintained or created a clear 'sense of community'. This cannot be manufactured, but the organisation and leadership of the school can play an important role in developing it.

## **9.6 Reflections on the positive value of a 'sense of community'**

Underlying all of this is the view that a 'sense of community' is a positive value. It is accepted that the human has a need for a sense of belonging, of community, but that this sense of belonging is dynamic and fluid. A feeling of being a community requires members to experience feelings of belongingness, trust in others and feelings of safety in that group (Osterman, 2000). Within schools the value of the members feeling this 'sense of community' has long been recognised (Furman, 2002). It gives individuals a 'prime source of individual identity and worth' (Morris, 1998, p. 88). Having a sense of belongingness, or 'sense of community' results in positive outcomes for individual and for student behaviour in school (Osterman, 2000, p. 6 & 22). The idea of a school as a community, a social unit, was explored by Bryk and Driscoll (1988), in that publication and in subsequent work they have detailed the advantages of a school functioning as a community (Bryk, et al., 1993). One of the major findings of Bryk's work in the USA was the contribution of a strong 'sense of community', which resulted in a

strong basis of social capital in the individuals in the school community (the implications of this will be further discussed in Chapter 12).

## **9.7 Community better created by Catholic schools?**

In discussion about the Catholic school community members of staff frequently raised the idea that this ‘sense of community’ was unique to Catholic schools.

[There is] a ‘sense of community’ about the whole school. Obviously [it is the] first school I have worked at [and I] trained at two other non-Catholic schools...It feels very different to be here to teach here.

(Jstaff fgi)

You do get that [‘sense of community’] in non-Catholic schools, but it is not to the same degree...it is not as evident.

(JStaff fgi)

Even in an Anglican school I don’t think you get the ‘sense of community’ that you do in a Catholic school.

(Jstaff fgi)

It is important to try and unpack this perception that Catholic schools have a more enhanced ‘sense of community’, which derives from the Catholic nature of the school. For the participants this was a source of pride, evidence that their school was somehow ‘better’ than non-Catholic schools.

People feel like they belong to the school and are not afraid of saying they come here.

(Jy10/11fgi)

One explanation for this is that the majority of participants had little or no experience of non-Catholic schools. Indeed many of the students had only experience of their Catholic primary school. Nevertheless, this perception is common to many Catholic students, Dipbo (1992, p. 100) noted that his Catholic university students made assumptions about the lack of community in public high schools in the USA.

### **9.7.1 Reflections on the secular nature of the ‘sense of community’**

Bryk (1996) argued that there were three main factors that contributed to a ‘sense of community’ in Catholic schools. These were: interaction between members of the community in academic and extra-curricular activities; the formal organisation and the role of teachers, in particular a sense of collegiality; and thirdly a sense of shared beliefs and values. All three of these factors were present in the responses of the participants in the Catholic schools in my research. However, such characteristics as: the organisation of the school; the role of head teacher; the role staff in promoting idea of community; the activities that function to bind the members together and to the traditions of the community; and shared values (Driscoll, 1995, p. 220) need not be unique to Catholic schools. A wide range of research has shown the value of the ‘sense of community’ within a school setting (Donlevy & MacCrimmon, 2009; Furman, 2002; Hawkes, 2009; Osterman, 2000; Pomson, 2009). Traditionally, within the English education system the aim has been that all schools should be ‘communities’ (Morris, 2010, p. 81) and a characteristic of the effective school is a strong school community (2010, p. 88). Farrer’s (2000) research at West Kidlington school and Hawkes’ (2009) own writings on the subject of values education, describe a school which has a well



developed ‘sense of community’. Research undertaken in inner London schools shows two different models of school, both engendering a good ‘sense of community’ amongst their students (Stevens, Lupton, Mujtaba, & Feinstein, 2007). The development of a school community and of a ‘sense of community’ is an integral part of both the Orthodox Jewish day school (Pomson, 2009), and Anglican schools (Gardner & Cairns, 2005).

However, Donlevy (2009) argues that there is evidence from research that Catholic schools do place a greater emphasis on developing the ‘sense of community’ and are successful at creating it. In their study of Catholic schools Johnson and Castelli (2000) found an emphasis on school as a community. The concept of community is a key feature of Catholicism, and thus at the core of Catholic philosophy of education is ‘subscription to the centrality of community’ (McClelland, 1996, p. 159). It was beyond the scope of this research to compare these Catholic school communities with secular schools and schools of other faith traditions. However, this would be an interesting subject for further research. What is relevant here is the perception present in these Catholic schools, that the ‘sense of community’ was unique to Catholic schools and ‘superior’ to that found elsewhere.

## **9.8 Theoretical reflections on the Catholic school as a ‘community of faith’**

Research (Bryk, et al., 1993; J. Coleman & Hoffer, 1987) on the benefits of community in Catholic schools has emphasised that the Catholic school is an

integral part of a local and global Catholic community. Groome (1996, p. 115) argued that a Catholic school should be not only a public community but also an ecclesial community, and that as such be in close contact with the local parish and be a faith community in itself. My research study has shown that the school community was not a homogeneous group of practicing Catholic student and staff (see Chapter 7), a view substantiated by previous research with other Catholic students (Francis & Egan, 1993; Gibson & Francis, 1989; Rymarz & Graham, 2006). The question arises then to what extent the Catholic school can be viewed as a 'community of faith'. Francis and Egan (1993) would argue that it cannot. This highlights a current debate in Catholic education. On the one hand it is argued that Catholic schools are communities of faith:

...Comprising staff and pupils from diverse backgrounds, founded on the teachings of Christ and expressed in the Beatitudes in the Sermon on the Mount. (Stock, 2005)

On the other hand, Gallagher (1996, p. 286) argues that most Catholic schools cannot be communities of faith as not all members of the community are committed to the Catholic faith tradition. These Catholic schools were not Catholic communities as defined by Morris (1998, p. 2, see section 9.3). Hermans (1999) argues that for a school to function as a community there needs to be a collective identity and a relationship between this collective identity and a personal identity. Many of the students stress this 'sense of belonging' to a Catholic community, but it is not a homogeneous community of practising Catholics. Perhaps the participants' view of Catholic identity and a Catholic community is more inclusive, and wider than that of the institutional Catholic Church.

The connections with the wider Catholic community were not as apparent as in Catholic schools of previous generations. There was some evidence of student involvement in the local parishes through voluntary work with the youth section of the Society of St Vincent de Paul (SVP). Otherwise there was no sense of the local Catholic parish being included in the idea of a 'sense of community'. The myth of the Catholic community as ghettoised was no longer relevant for these Catholic schools; they are no longer serving a threatened ethnic minority as in the nineteenth century. Research (Parker-Jenkins, et al., 2005, p. 57) suggests that in Greek Orthodox schools the enhanced 'sense of community' is due in part to a strong connection to a common ethnic and language background. There was no apparent connection in my research to an Irish Catholic heritage, such as had existed in the region studied in the early to mid-twentieth century. The Catholic schools involved in this research were not communities of faith as were the Catholic schools in the mid-twentieth century (Brothers, 1964; Hickman, 1995; Morris, 1998, p. 91), but then the wider Catholic community is itself quite different to the Catholic community of even fifty years ago (see Chapter 1). As Grace (2002, p.42) points out, the habitus engendered in the Catholic school has changed; it is not possible in a diocesan comprehensive school to maintain the habitus found in traditional Catholic schools run by religious orders. Although the Catholic Church seeks to maintain the habitus in its diocesan schools through the appointment of Catholic leaders, such a holistic Catholic habitus is difficult to maintain in schools with an increasing number of staff and students who are non-Catholic or have a weak or thin Catholic identity (see Chapter 7 and 8).

For Coleman and Hoffer (1987) the strength of the Catholic school community was that norms, values and sanctions were mutually reinforced through home and school. The role of parental involvement is seen as an important factor in the effectiveness of the Catholic school (Morris, 2010). There was little reference to parents by the participants in this research. Staff praised parents' support of the school, with regard to home learning and discipline, but lamented the low attendance at after school meetings. With the weakened role of the family and the Catholic parish community (Hanvey & Carroll, 2005), for some young participants the Catholic school is the only place where a Catholic community is encountered.

Nowadays it is often the Catholic school rather than the family that children and young people are taught the importance of community.

(P. Collins, 2008)

In research in Australian schools Collins (1991) found that more and more Australian Catholics referred to themselves as cultural Catholics; they maintained an understanding of themselves as Catholic, but are alienated from many of the Church teachings and not involved in regular practice. He argues 'for many cultural Catholics the only Church institution they have contact with is the Catholic school' (Collins [1991] cited in Freund, 2001, p. 3). The cultural dimension of religion (Hervieu-Léger, 1998) includes knowledge of the religious tradition, its ideas, and ways of thinking, but can exist separately from the beliefs, values and practices of the religious tradition. This cultural dimension of Catholicism is reflected in the idea of a community that perceives itself to have a shared heritage, even though many of its members may not believe in or practice the religion.

## **9.9 Conclusion**

This chapter has shown that there is a strong 'sense of community' within these Catholic schools, which is based on social interaction, shared values and strong perception of being a Catholic community. Although the participants argued that the 'sense of community' was uniquely Catholic, other studies have shown that non-Catholic schools value and develop a 'sense of community'. These Catholic schools are communities which include non-Catholics and individuals of diverse Catholic identities; they are not communities of faith in that all share the same belief, but are communities based on faith, based on a sense of the dignity of the human person rooted in community. A reification of the faith community needs to be avoided; the Catholic community within the school is not homogenous (see Chapter 7). For some, possibly the majority of students within these Catholic schools, the school will be the only place where they feel part of a Catholic community. A school community that maybe does not fulfil all the requirements of an ecclesial or faith community, but a school community that is based on a belief in a shared Catholic tradition or culture. The next chapter explores the boundaries of these Catholic school communities.

## **Chapter 10: Drawing the boundaries**

### **10.1 Introduction**

Chapter 9 described participants' perceptions of the strong 'sense of community' within a Catholic school. To fully comprehend any community, it is important to consider the views of its boundaries. This chapter addresses the issues raised in research question 4 to what extent the Catholic school contributes to, or detracts from community cohesion, it does this through an exploration of the boundaries of the Catholic school community and of the activities that maintain or cross these boundaries. The chapter begins with an exploration of an understanding of the flexibility and fluidity of boundaries. The next section focuses on the participants' views of the boundaries of, and the barriers around their school community, both internal and external. The third section examines perceptions of the boundary between Catholicism and other faith traditions. The final section of the chapter examines activities within the Catholic school, which seek to create a bridge across the boundaries, and concludes with a brief reflection on the differences between the participants' and the researcher's perception of the boundaries of the Catholic school.

### **10.2 Theoretical reflections of the concept of boundaries**

To fully understand the participants' responses concerning the concept of boundary, it is of value to consider some theoretical reflections on this concept. The identity of any community is defined by the boundaries it draws around itself,

by whom it includes and whom it excludes. The Norwegian anthropologist F. Barth (1969) argued that groups form boundaries including those seen as similar to themselves and excluding those seen as strangers or 'Others'. According to social identity theory (Tajfel and Turner, 1979), an individual's social identity is constructed through recognising similarities with the in-group and emphasising differences with the out-group.

The creation of the in-group becomes intricately linked to the identification of the out-group. (Woehrle and Cox [2000] cited in M. Leonard, 2006, p. 1121)

For a collective identity to flourish, members need to notice how much more they are like the other members of the group, than they are like people of a different group. Young people are active in their perception of the out-group; they will attribute positive characteristics to those they perceive as like them and negative ones to those they consider as outsiders (Milner, 1996, p. 252). Although Brewer (2005) argues the case that an out-group is not necessarily needed to define the in-group. Boundaries of communities are fluid entities (Veverka, 2004) ; they have a 'symbolic character and function' and what is binding in one generation is less significant in the next (2004, p.45). It is important to acknowledge that not only those on the inside, but also those on the outside construct the boundary of a community, or religion.

Any boundary distinguishing Christian from non-Christian way of life cannot be determined by looking at Christianity alone. (Tanner [1997] cited in Veverka, 2004, p.45)

However, within the constraints of this research, this chapter will explore how the participants (those inside) perceived the boundary of their Catholic school

community. It was apparent, however, that not all those inside viewed the boundary in the same way. An interesting exploration for further research would be to examine the boundaries of Catholic schools as defined by those on the other side of the boundary.

One of the original aims of this research was to explore the participants' perceptions of other faith traditions and of the activities within the Catholic school which encouraged interaction with other faiths. However, in the initial fieldwork, it became apparent that a focus on other faith traditions would not be a fruitful line of enquiry. Whereas when the questions concerned their Catholic school or their Catholic identity the conversation flowed freely, in all groups when the questions turned to other faiths the participants were less forthcoming. The questions asked about other faiths resulted in a paucity of information. One of my concerns was that the participants appeared conscious of having to say 'the right thing'. Students were concerned not to appear racist, for example in one discussion about members of other faiths, one student asked '[the] ones with a turban that's a Sikh. [It is] not racist like...describing people [like that]?' (Cy9fgi). The adult participants were also aware of the government's initiative on community cohesion (Department for Children Schools and Families, 2007b) and they perceived that faith schools had a negative image in the media.

Nevertheless, in returning to review the data, it became apparent that the students and staff did perceive that there were boundaries to, and barriers around, their school communities. They did identify an 'Other', distinct from themselves, although different participants described the boundaries in different ways. The



students identified the admissions policy as a barrier, as a mechanism of excluding non-Catholics from their school community. The next section will consider to what extent the admissions policy functioned as a barrier. The three sections following highlight the boundaries of the school community, as defined by the participants' responses. The boundaries identified in their responses were: the local state community school, people of no faith, and the non-British Catholic students.

### **10.3 A barrier: the admissions policy**

The school admissions policy was an important determinant of the school community. It was frequently mentioned in the interviews that one had to be a Catholic to come to the school.

[It is] easier to be a Catholic to get in. (Jy12fgi)

It's got like a requirement to be Catholic to come to this school.

(Cy9fgi)

It is interesting to note that a search using the 'Google' search engine (September 2009) for a definition of "baptised, practising Catholic", revealed that the majority of the responses on the first page were links to the admissions policies of English Catholic schools. The school admissions policy is thus an important document in deciding who belongs to the Catholic school community (Grace, 2002). The admissions policies of all three Catholic secondary schools studied were similar. The first category for admission was Catholic children who were 'Looked After' or 'Statemented' children, this category is determined by government guidelines for school admissions (Department for Education and Skills, 2007). The second

category for admissions to all three Catholic schools was that of 'baptised Catholic who attends one of the Catholic feeder primary schools'. St Margaret's added the following criteria to children in that category:

who with their parents/guardians share the above philosophy and who have been recipients of, or are currently being prepared for the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Communion.

The next category for entry in all three schools was Catholic children in a non-Catholic school within the local parish area. The schools differed over the fourth category in so much as, St Julian's has children of other faith who attend one of the feeder primary schools although 'a Minister/Faith Leader's letter of support is required', while St Catherine's and St Margaret's had Catholic children outside the parish area. In the St Margaret's admissions policy, category 5 was for 'baptised non-Catholic children from regular church going families who would positively identify with the essentially Catholic atmosphere of the school.' For St Catherine's and St Julian's, it was only in the later categories that non-Catholic children would be included. All three schools involved in this research were over-subscribed schools, which meant there was no pressure on them to include more non-Catholics, as this would have to be done at the expense of Catholic children. For St Margaret's one of the implications of being over-subscribed was, as the head teacher explained, that despite there being a 'reasonable number of Asian families' in the town, the admissions criteria would prevent them from entering St Margaret's.

Both St Margaret's and St Catherine's schools admissions policy outlined how they aimed to follow the Catholic Bishops' Conference guidelines on 'a 15% limit on non-Catholic admissions in each year group'. Many Catholic dioceses throughout the world have struggled with the challenge of admissions of non-Catholic students into Catholic schools. One of the solutions has been to set a limit, in Canada a limit has been set at around 30% of non-Catholic students, and in Western Australia the limit is of 25% non-Catholic students (Donlevy, 2006, p. 12). In the view of the Catholic diocesan policy makers the limit is important, as a Catholic school's basic remit is to provide an education for Catholic children (see Chapter 1). Others have focused on the idea that a large number of non-Catholics will widen the gap between the school and the Catholic parish (Donlevy, 2006, p. 10). Research (Gibson & Francis, 1989) has found that having non-Catholic students within a school does result in changes to attitudes to Christianity. However, Donlevy (2006, p. 12) argues that inclusion of non-Catholics up to a level of about 30% does not appear to have a detrimental affect on the Catholic faith of the students.

The barrier that is the admissions policy appeared clear and defined. However, as seen in Chapter 7, identifying as a 'baptised Catholic' can mean anything from a child who is brought up in a practising Catholic home and regularly attends a Catholic church, to someone who has been baptised for the purposes of entering the school, while the majority of students fall in between these extremes, and have a wide variety of Catholic beliefs and practices. Nevertheless, while the admissions policy might admit a variety of Catholics, it does serve as a clear barrier to the majority of the local population who are of another faith tradition or

no faith tradition. It is perceived by many outside the Catholic school (Allen & West, 2009), to be such a barrier that it excludes the poorest members of society, low achievers, and members of other faith traditions (see further discussion Chapter 12).

#### **10.4 An external boundary: the ‘Other’ school**

For the student participants, one very visible boundary of the school community was between themselves and the ‘other’ school, the local state community school. In my first transcription of the interviews I quickly passed over the students’ discussions of the ‘other’ school, however as I transcribed more and more interviews with the young people it became obvious that their stories about the ‘other’ school were an important marker of their own school identity. The personal values of individuals are expressed in the ordinariness of everyday behaviour and interaction (Goffman [1969] cited in Richter, 2004). In all three schools the students, when seeking to explain what their school was like, compared themselves to the neighbouring community school. The ‘Other’ for them was not concerned with issues of faith traditions, but with those they came into regular contact.

As the participants strove to explain how their school was different, they invariably told stories of encounters of the students at the local community school. St Margaret’s and St Catherine’s were situated very close to the local community school and some students would encounter members of those schools every day on their way to school. The perception shared by all the student

participants was that the ‘other school’ was less disciplined, or had a less fair system of discipline and that no one in their school would want to go to the ‘other school’ and even that people in those schools would really prefer to be in the Catholic school.

When you see like people who go to the school round the corner you always think [they] look a bit rough and you always think [they are] different to us. [I] don’t think anyone in this school would want to say “I would want to go to school round the corner”...[I] don’t think we would...Some of them have even said they would want to go to our school.

(Cy9fgi)

Students who went to the ‘other school’ were ‘rough’, and did not ‘respect people much’, as in one student’s response:

I know lots [of] people go to schools that aren’t Catholic and they don’t respect people much.

(Jy12fgi)

Some of the students even repeated stories they had heard about what went on in these other schools.

We are nice to each other [not like]...the school next door. [They] look rough [and are] not really bothered about what they do in school...We don’t set fireworks off in the toilets...[and our] teachers want us to do well...in other schools teachers [are] getting hurt, [that] wouldn’t happen here, we all care.

(My7fgi)

The stories are second-hand accounts, but were accepted by all members of the group in the interview.

Some of the students were concerned that the safe environment of their school was not replicated elsewhere.

I mean [you] can have too much trust... in school [it is] like a barrier cut off from the rest of the world...in this school everyone is with each other...I think you have to be more careful when you come out of this school ...Other schools aren't brought up in our environment [and could] exploit our trust when we leave school.

(Cy9fgi)

This idea that the school is creating a safe haven, a community of like-minded people who are separated from those outside, is not unique to Catholic schools. In another research study (Stevens, et al., 2007) with young people in two inner city schools in London, the same view that their school was a safer place than the neighbourhood outside was expressed. These London students regarded both London schools as relatively 'safe havens', where intolerance and violence were not permitted (Stevens, et al., 2007). Although the neighbourhood outside the Catholic schools in my research differed greatly from that of inner city London, the view of a boundary or barrier between the school and the surrounding neighbourhood is common to both research studies.

The students also questioned the discipline systems of the 'other' school. Strict discipline was seen as a positive advantage of the Catholic school, it was closely connected with achieving better exam results (see Chapters 8 and 11). There was an underlying perception that belonging to the Catholic school community meant that they were 'better' than those students who attended the non-Catholic schools. In several interviews the students explained that their school achieved better exam

results than school X, a view that was borne out in an analysis of the local school examination league tables. Research (Grace, 2002; Morris, 1997, 2010) has examined the image of the Catholic schools as academically successful schools (see further in Chapter 11).

The students who participated in the research had very little experience of attending a non-Catholic school, the majority having experienced their education wholly in the Catholic sector. Their ideas about the ‘other’ school were for the most part not based on personal knowledge of having been students in a non-Catholic school; many were quite ignorant of what non-Catholic schools were like, for example in one interview the students discuss whether non-Catholic schools would celebrate Mass. Leonard (2006, p. 1121), noted in her research in Northern Ireland that it was clear that teenagers’ lives were situated with reference to ‘them’ and ‘us’. In Northern Ireland, the ‘them’ and ‘us’ were clearly defined by their faith tradition, but within the schools in this research there was little reference to the faith of the ‘other’. The understanding of otherness was perhaps more to do with inter-school rivalry than issues of faith. The only mention of faith was in the names that they claimed that members of the other school called them, ‘[They] call us “bible bashers”’ (Jy12fgi). It would be interesting to explore the views of members of the ‘other’ school towards the Catholic school and towards their own school.

The stories of the other school served the purpose of emphasising the value of being within the Catholic school.

People have a basic need to see themselves in a positive light in relation to relevant others and this leads to a positive social identity in relation to out-groups. (Hogg, 1996, p. 66)

The impression of the participants was that, being outside the Catholic school, being in the other schools, was not a safe environment. The participants' understanding was that the Catholic school was the one to which others would aspire.

### **10.5 An Internal Boundary: those of no faith**

For the adult participants in this research the most visible boundary of the school community was between Catholics and those of no faith. This was perceived as a barrier between the Catholic school and secular society outside, but also between Catholic and non-Catholic members of the school community. One Catholic member of staff in St Julian's explained that in school it was an issue with people of no faith rather than people of other faiths.

I don't know any...other faiths because I think at the minute we have people of no faith rather than of other faiths.

(JStaff fgi)

This echoed a view of a deputy Director of Education who argued that her most important concern was the number of students in Catholic schools with no faith and ensuring the faith development of those non-Catholics within a Catholic school. Some of the adult participants seemed to include in 'people with no faith', Catholics who did not practise, or attend Mass. The student participants did not raise the issue of people with no faith. Perhaps because many of the young people



who do not value Mass attendance as a marker of Catholic identity, would not categorise non-practising Catholics as people of no faith. Another factor might have been that religion was not something they discussed with their peers, and so the majority did not know what religion their friends were, or presumed they were Catholic as they were in a Catholic school. The young participants perceived that there were no major distinguishing features of being a Catholic or non-Catholic in a Catholic school (see Chapter 7).

...being a Catholic in this school apart from getting in...I don't think  
it is a massive issue. (Jy12fgi)

## **10.6 An internal boundary: non-British Catholics**

Another internal boundary that was mentioned by both staff and students was the distinction between the British Catholics and members of the immigrant population from Poland or the Philippines. In all the schools there were a small number of Polish and/or Philippino Catholic students. A member of staff at St Catherine's explained why the students perceived the Polish students in the school to be different.

Part of the problem [is that] some of the Polish [students] don't speak  
very good English, they rely on interpreters...[for the students] culture  
and religion [it is] common...to run to them together.

(Cstaff fgi)

In discussions with both student and adult participants there was slippage between ethnic and religious differences of people. This perception that the Polish or Philippino immigrants were not Catholic was found in some of the responses of

the participants in this research. Frequently when I asked about members of other faiths the interviewee would speak of ethnic differences and mention would be made of the Polish or Philippino children in school. This slippage was not unique to the participants within the research. A diocesan Director of Education spoke of a primary school in the diocese where over a third of the pupils were children of recent immigrants to the area; mainly Philippino and Keralite Catholics, although an increasing number of Polish children. When he visited the school, the children did not seem aware of the differences and he detected 'no tension' between the children. However some Catholic parents had moved their children out of school.

They don't want them mixing with [them]...one parent had asked why  
are you letting all these Muslims in school? (Director of Education ii)

Elsewhere in the diocese the Director recognised that the influx of Polish immigrants had caused some tension, with some Catholics maintaining that the Polish children were 'taking our places in Catholic schools'. Although as he pointed out these Polish Catholics were more likely to fulfil the Catholic Church criteria of Catholic identity with regular Sunday Mass attendance. This confusion of ethnic and religious differences was also found in the participants' descriptions of members of other faith traditions.

## **10.7 An Internal boundary: members of other faith traditions**

This area of the research proved problematic, because of misunderstandings of what was meant by other faiths and many of the participants' lack of knowledge of other faiths. It became apparent early on in the fieldwork that questions about other faith traditions had to be clearly formed, as some participants - both students

and staff - interpreted other faiths as meaning other Christian denominations. For example in a small group of year 7 students in St Margaret's two of the girls described themselves as Protestant. One of the other Catholic students in the group referred to these two Protestant girls when she explained that:

even though this is a Catholic school you have pupils of different faiths...you get to be friends ...you can learn about their faith.

(My7fgi)

On another occasion the chaplain in St Julian's explained that she was trying to improve contact with other faiths and thus had invited the local Anglican vicar into school. The admissions policy and over subscription of all three schools meant that there were very few members of non-Christian faith traditions within the three schools involved in this research. When asked about members of other faiths, the students in St Margaret's all mentioned that there was a Muslim teacher within the school. A Catholic member of staff at St Julian's expressed the view that the majority of students were unaware of any members of other faiths within school, or if they were aware, they perceived them foremost as a member of the school community.

I am an RE teacher, and I would teach about other faiths. They [the students] don't realise that they are in a classroom with someone who is actually a Muslim and they...say something that might be a derogatory comment about the faith and then turn round and have just a conversation with someone, not realising [they are Muslim]. They don't look...at one another in a faith way, but they just bring in...attitudes from media and parents. They see Muslims as being far away and somewhere else...that is due to what they read and what is on the

TV. I think they are very tolerant of other peoples' attitudes even though they are not the same attitudes they have themselves...[and are] much [more] tolerant than their parents and grandparents are.

(Jstaff fgi)

One of the year 12 participants in St Julian's who was a Muslim spoke freely about the negative attitudes he encountered outside the school, especially when wearing traditional dress, but claimed he was unaware of being treated as different inside the school.

I don't mind going to Mass, they [the school] have acknowledged that I'm not Catholic [he was excused from going to Mass in school] so I respect that and go to Mass and get a blessing...[I] just go with the flow...there aren't any other religions to mix with, I don't know any other Muslims in the school apart from my sister.

(Jy12fgi)

These two quotes give the impression that being a member of the school community took precedence over membership of a different faith tradition. As a member of the school community, one was viewed as an insider, but members of other faiths outside the school community were not viewed so favourably.

A diocesan deputy Director of Education saw the presence of members of other faith traditions within Catholic schools as a challenge. She argued that the Catholic school had a duty to ensure the faith development of members of other faiths within the school, but that the Catholic school must maintain the boundaries between the faiths, for example ensuring that Muslims children were not required to make the sign of the cross. A Director of Education also mentioned that this

was an issue; in class prayers and assemblies, many teachers assumed that all students are Catholics and that they knew the sign of the cross, the Lord's Prayer, and the Hail Mary prayer. The Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales has published guidelines for Catholic schools with pupils of other faiths. Elsewhere in England Catholic schools are coming to terms with having a greater proportion of members of other faith traditions in schools and a positive response is documented in Breen's research (2009). However, the majority of the participants in this research viewed other faiths traditions as being external to their Catholic school community, and the next section considers further their views of members of other faith traditions.

## **10.8 The Catholic school and other faith traditions**

In the interviews there was evidence of confused knowledge about other faiths and a tendency to mix up beliefs and traditions from other religions. However, the most common response in the interviews was that the participants did not know anything or enough about other faiths to be able to answer the questions.

I don't know... I am not sure...I don't know I [have] never been taught that. (Jy12fgi)

Many of the students thought that other schools learnt much more about other faiths.

They [other schools] have a term on it [Islam], in Catholic schools you don't get that here. (Jy12fgi)

Catholic schools don't teach enough about it [other faiths].

(Jy12fgi)

The students expressed the view that the reason they did not learn about other religions was because they were a Catholic school, which was based on Catholicism.

Staff in St Catherine's discussed the value of teaching Islam to year 9 classes in so much that after overcoming the initial negative reaction from students; it would be a chance for students to discuss their misconceptions. The staff acknowledged that it is a difficult subject to tackle:

In this area as there is such a small minority of other faiths; they don't meet Muslims. (Cstaff fgi)

However, many students desired to know more about other faiths. The students argued that they needed knowledge about other religions.

Because all these other cultures coming in...we haven't been taught about it...so it's very threatening to other people who don't know about it. (Jy12fgi)

From the above it can be seen that there was a perception on the part of both students and staff that there was a need or desire to learn about other faiths. In all three schools there was no student awareness of the teaching about other faith traditions at Key Stage 4 or 5. At Key Stage 3 the schools followed Catholic and diocesan guidelines, which were based on the Icons program (see Chapter 1). This programme gave around two weeks per year to the teaching of other faith traditions. However, all three schools had adapted this program and were now devoting more curriculum time to the study of other faiths. Nevertheless, the year 10,11 and 12 students who participated in this research had not experienced this revised syllabus (see further discussion in Chapter 12).

The responses of many of the students who did feel they could answer the questions about Muslims focused on the strictness of the Islamic faith. The perception of the year nine students from St Catherine's was based on what they had learnt in RE rather than any personal encounter with Muslims. RE was seen as portraying what a devout Muslim should do and the students appeared then to compare this with their understanding of the Catholics they encountered in their everyday life. As seen elsewhere (Chapter 7) the students' perception of Catholic identity was of a fluid flexible identity, which does not manifest itself in many differences with secular society. The students appeared to assume that all Muslims were devout, and were a homogenous group, while perceiving that Catholics were a heterogeneous group. Piper and Garratt (2004) highlighted one of the dangers of studying other religious traditions in RE or citizenship, was that students would categorise the unknown as homogenous and not become aware that all identities are fluid and flexible. This would result in an unawareness of Muslims diverse identity (Piper and Garratt 2004). The students' responses in St Catherine's reflected factual knowledge about for example, the five pillars of Islam, as opposed to any knowledge of Muslim faith as a 'lived religion'. This points to evidence of what Dearden ([1968] cited in Short, 1994, p. 398) calls rucksack knowledge; information without understanding. Similarly, Short (1994) argues that the understanding behind the knowledge is necessary in order to avoid perceiving the other as strange. The value of the 'encounter' with other faith traditions will be developed further in Chapter 12.

## **10.9 Crossing the boundaries: bridge building**

A religious community creates boundaries or builds walls, to ensure that the religious identity is maintained, however religious communities will also include members who will seek to be 'bridge builders', in education both are 'theologically and educationally necessary and enriching' (Eck [1993] cited in Veverka 2004 p38). This section will consider the bridge building activities within these Catholic school communities. Bridge building activities can make a crucial contribution to developing a social cohesive society.

For many Catholics social cohesion has a theological basis in the teachings of 'love your neighbour' and the understanding of every human being as a creation of God. This involves a respect for difference and an identification of commonality (Nichols, 2007). Existing good practice in Catholic schools has been outlined by the Catholic Education Service (2008) in 'Community Cohesion Guidance for Catholic Schools'. This document describes activities which: develop and support the disadvantaged in the local community; and in the global community for example the elderly and asylum seekers; developing initiatives in protecting the local environment; and links with the global community through visits, visitors, and e-twinning. The promotion of community cohesion thus involves a creation of a web of ties across the many different areas that are part of the community in which the school is placed. These link up with student views of activities that took place in the three Catholic schools in my research study. Some examples of the activities described were: inviting local parishioners into school to share worship; inviting members of the local community into school for



activities such as computing classes; the proposed cyber café at St Margaret's. Many of the adults mentioned the charity work undertaken in school, which ranged from raising money for Cafod, selling Fairtrade goods in school, organising a lunch to raise awareness of the situation in Burma, to collecting and distributing hampers to local elderly people (see Chapter 9).

However, there were also some examples of bridge building activities with other faith traditions. There were opportunities to visit mosques and synagogues. Some of St Margaret's students spoke of going on a visit in primary school to the mosque in the town and in St Catherine's a small number of students had visited the mosque at the local university and provided feedback to the rest of their year group. The staff explained a visit of the whole year to mosque would be difficult to arrange because of the numbers, and the cost, so the visit of a small number was a compromise solution.

Year 12 students in St Julian's described one project that did aim to build bridges with other faith traditions and the older generation. As part of year 12 enrichment activity, some students took part in 'Building Bridges of Understanding: an interfaith Oral History Project', this was an intergenerational project. The project was initiated in school through the history department who were actively involved with the local council in intergenerational work. It involved asking members of the six main religions about their beliefs and practices, and videoing the interviews to create a DVD about the faith traditions in the local region. The sixth form participants who had taken part in this project spoke enthusiastically about it

and how it had caused them to think about their beliefs, as Rebecca\* a year 12 student explained:

[In] enrichment [we are] doing a DVD. [I] interviewed a Muslim and Catholic and...a Christian. They were saying [it] is just one God over everyone...All one faith just different parts of the world ...there is just one God, different perspective...I wouldn't know any thing if it wasn't for ...this DVD, [it was] actually interesting.

(Jy12fgi)

The few students, who had been involved in developing this DVD, had thoroughly enjoyed the experience and thought that it had given them an insight into the lives of members of other faith traditions. The value of activities such as this is explored further in Chapter 12.

### **10.10 The researcher's views of the boundary**

This area of the research highlighted the difference between the researcher's and the participants' views of the school community. As researcher I had presumed the focus would be on the boundaries drawn between the Catholic participants and members of other faith traditions. For the student participants it was clearly between them and those who went to the local community school, for the adult participants it was between the Catholic school and those of no faith. The students focused on the difference in values of respect for others, discipline and academic achievement between themselves and members of the local community school. They highlighted moral values of respect, discipline and academic achievement as an aspect that marked their Catholic school out as different from others, rather

than religious practices and beliefs. Their views were based on their perceptions of personal encounters with students from other schools.

The students did not focus on religious difference as being one of the boundary lines of their school. Most of the Catholic students did not have much experience of encounters with members of other faith traditions, with few members of other faith traditions found within the Catholic school. In a mono-cultural area the perceptions of the differences between faith traditions were dependent less on encounter than on knowledge and understanding gained from the school, or the mass media. Maybe they did not see themselves as having a strong Catholic identity and a weak self-identity as a Catholic could lead to the perception of weak boundaries between 'them' and 'us'. There was not a need for active measures of cohesion, as a Catholic identity was perceived as the 'norm', unlike Catholics in previous generations for example the Irish Catholics of Hickman's (1995) study or minority groups such as Muslims in today's society. It could be that the participants did not highlight this as a boundary as religious identity is not as important to them (see Chapter 12).

### **10.11 Conclusion**

This chapter has explored a variety of perceptions of the boundaries of and the barriers around the Catholic school community. For the students the greatest barrier appeared to be the admissions policy. While three main boundaries were perceived to be: 1) with the local community school, 2) between Catholics and the non-Catholic members of the school community; and 3) students and Catholic

non-British students. However, the participants' views of the boundaries with, those of no faith, and members of other non-Catholic schools, provided an interesting insight into their understanding of their Catholic school community. Perceptions of members of other faith traditions were explored and highlighted the limited knowledge of the participants and their lack of encounters with members of other faiths. A perception of weak boundaries between the Catholic school and other faith traditions does not mean that the bonds of the Catholic school are weak; the bonds of a community are not dependent on 'the clarity, precision or stability of the community boundaries' (Veverka, 2004, p.48). Chapter 12 will look more closely at some of the issues raised in this chapter, the extent to which the Catholic school contributes to community cohesion, given the barrier of the admissions policy and the limited encounters with other faith traditions. The next chapter, 11, considers the role of the Catholic school within the Catholic faith tradition, and the development of religious and or spiritual capital.

## **Chapter 11: The Catholic secondary school and the Catholic faith tradition**

### **11.1 Introduction**

The previous five chapters explored elements of three Catholic schools in twenty-first century England, namely: Catholicity and values; the Catholic identity of the students; the transmission of the Catholic faith tradition; the ‘sense of community’ and boundaries to the school community. Chapter 12 will consider issues of cohesion, both internal and external, but this chapter will reflect on the insights these ethnographic findings offer into the role of the Catholic school within the Catholic faith tradition. This chapter addresses the first two of the research questions: (1) the extent to which members of the school community perceived these Catholic schools to be Catholic, and (2) the ways in which these Catholic schools ensure the transmission of the Catholic faith tradition.

In addressing these two questions I intend to put forward two arguments: firstly, that religious capital is diminishing in these Catholic schools and that the Catholic Church’s control of the memory of the tradition is becoming increasingly precarious. Secondly, that the concept of spiritual capital is more relevant than religious capital to participants’ experiences within Catholic schools. The student participants in this study appear to be ‘bricoleurs’ (Hervieu-Léger, 2000), in so much as they are using the resources of the Catholic faith tradition encountered in school to construct a religious identity, which appears increasingly distant from the roots of the Catholic faith tradition. Religious and spiritual capital are

sometimes confused in the literature, and it is important to set out clear definitions as they are quite distinct. For the purposes of this research, the understanding of religious and spiritual capital will follow Verter's (2003, p. 127) definitions developed from Bourdieu's work (see Chapter 3). Religious capital is fixed, closely connected to a mainstream religious tradition, while spiritual capital is a more fluid resource with more tenuous links to a mainstream religious tradition (Guest 2010). The first section of this chapter will examine the development of religious capital within the Catholic school, how this is maintained, created and challenged. The second section reflects the precariousness of the memory of the Catholic faith tradition. The final section considers the extent to which the students are 'bricoleurs' in their construction of Catholic identities within the Catholic school.

## **11.2 An unbroken chain of memory**

Religious capital is distinctive in that it focuses on the 'goods of salvation' (see Chapter 3), that is 'the resources deemed by the religious tradition to be requisite to salvation' (Davies & Guest, 2007, p. 6). These could be recognised membership of the Catholic Church and/or Catholic rituals such as Mass, beliefs and doctrines or access to sacred spaces. One measurement of religious capital is the commitment to the faith tradition.

[A] willingness to sacrifice for the faith, live by a moral code, participate in outward signs of religious piety and practice. (Finke & Dougherty, 2002, p. 107)

Within Catholicism this commitment could be measured in terms of attendance at Mass in the parish church. The next section examines participants' views of the resources, which could be described as religious capital, in the three Catholic schools in this research.

A Catholic school is part of the mission of the Catholic Church (see Chapter 1) and 'cannot decide for itself what it means to be Catholic' (Dutch Bishops [1977] cited in Arthur, 1995, p. 226). However, this chapter is concerned with what the marks of a Catholic school were perceived to be by members of the school community. The main symbols and rituals that the participants focused on were aspects of the physical environment, such as the crucifix and the chapel, and also Catholic liturgies such as the celebration of Mass, and Catholic traditions such as the Lourdes pilgrimage (see Chapter 6). Some of these elements of the Catholic tradition were unchanged from Catholic schools in generations past. The crucifix in the classroom was 'the most distinctive visual clue of a Catholic school' (McCann, 1998, p. 17), and was for many of the participants still what marked their school out as Catholic (see Chapter 6). However, many of participants' responses did reflect some changes in the perception of the Catholic faith tradition in the Catholic school. The next section considers their views of the school chapel, and the celebration of Mass in school.

### **11.2.1 The school chapel**

In St Catherine's and St Margaret's school, the chapel was described by the participants as an important marker of the Catholicity of the school, both the

space itself and the liturgies which occurred therein (see Chapter 6). The presence of a chapel within the school was a resource of religious capital; a place where the connection to the Catholic faith tradition was most explicit. However, the students viewed the chapel as part of the school, rather than a substitute for a parish church. Brothers (1964, pp. 65-66) had remarked that the presence of a school chapel and chaplain in Catholic schools lessened the connection with the local parish church. The student participants expressed the view that the school chapel was open to everyone not only “hardcore” Catholics nor even was it exclusively for Catholics (see Chapter 6). What marked the school chapel out was that it was outside the normal school hustle and bustle and provided a quiet space for students and what is important in sacred spaces is ‘the quiet, the order, the peace and the chance to be alone’ (Stringer, 2008, p.62). The school chapel as a sacred place within school was a visible connection with the Catholic faith tradition, but one in which the student participants felt able to interpret for their own purposes (see Chapter 6).

### **11.2.2 The celebration of Mass**

Another element of the Catholic faith tradition, which was still present in these Catholic schools, was the celebration of Mass, although this occurred less often than in the past. As one member of staff in St Julian’s explained, in previous times there were regular compulsory celebrations of Mass for all members of the school community. Celebrations of Mass still took place in these Catholic schools, but it was often on a voluntary basis, perhaps only once a year was there a compulsory Mass. Nonetheless, many participants described a celebration of



Mass in school as clear evidence of the Catholic nature of their school (see Chapter 6). A change from previous times was that St Julian's not only provided the opportunity for the students to celebrate Mass, but the school also gave many of the students their only access to the sacrament. For some students it was in school that they learnt about the meaning of Mass and mastered the 'technique' needed, for example the lay chaplain delivered a lesson to all year seven classes before they celebrated their first school Mass so 'they knew what to expect' (see Chapter 6).

The celebration of Mass in school is a very visible connection to the Catholic faith tradition. Nonetheless, in all the schools in this research, the celebration of Mass was perceived as being for all members of the school, not just the 'hardcore' or religious Catholic. While a non-Catholic member of staff in St Julian's expressed the view that the celebration of Mass in school emphasised her feelings of being an outsider, other participants viewed involvement of the whole school in Mass as a sign of the 'sense of community' within school (see Chapter 9). The school chapel and the celebration of Mass in school could be seen as sources of religious capital within school, a means of ensuring attachment to the Catholic faith tradition. Yet some of the students viewed both these resources as something that reflected the Catholic faith tradition in their school, but also as resources that belonged to all members of the Catholic school community.

### **11.3 The Catholic school and transmission of religious capital**

Religious capital can be maintained or generated in the Catholic school through control of memory of the faith tradition. The transmission of the memory of a faith tradition from one generation to the next is essential for the survival of the religious institution (Hervieu-Léger, 1998, p. 213). However, transmission is fraught with difficulties in that the memory is open to interpretation both by the transmitter and by the receiver, and there will always be battles for control of the memory (see Chapter 2). Bourdieu's (1987) understanding of religious capital focused on the issues of power and he examined it in terms of who held control of access to these goods of salvation. He emphasises the importance of the recognised religious specialists such as the clergy, and their power to control access to the religious capital (see Chapter 3). This idea of power and control is also pertinent to maintenance of the memory of a tradition. Mestrovic's (1997) work on the control of the memory of the tradition in the Balkans showed that it was the control of the past that gave authority to present institutions (see Chapter 2). This emphasis on control is relevant in the development of religious capital in faith schools. Religious capital is visibly present for example the resources of the school chapel and the celebration of Mass. However, the invisible resources of religious capital also need to be maintained and transmitted to each generation.

Memory should not be viewed as a solid object to be passed on to or be created by one generation to the next; it is subject to constant reconstruction (see Chapter 2). There is 'no such thing as collective memory, but there is collective instruction' (Sontag [2003] cited in M. Leonard, 2006, p. 1124). There are many opportunities

within the Catholic school for ‘collective instruction’. The next section will consider the two main opportunities perceived by the participants in my research, namely curriculum Religious Education (RE) and the example of Catholic staff.

### **11.3.1 Religious Education**

One of the main means of making explicit this memory of tradition is through the medium of RE in the Catholic school. In the Catholic schools in my research the connection between the local Catholic diocese, the national Catholic education service and the RE curriculum in a Catholic school in school was clear (see Chapters 1 and 7). RE could thus be viewed as confessional RE (Jackson, 2008b, p. 7). One of the major criticisms of faith schools is that such schools threaten a child’s autonomy and are a means of indoctrination (see Chapter 1). Confessional RE within a Catholic school could be seen as such a threat. In the three Catholic schools RE was confessional in so far as the development of curricula was the responsibility of the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales and the aim of the Catholic Church was to nurture faith. While curriculum RE was viewed by the Catholic Church as a means of ‘catechesis’, many of the young people viewed it as a means to develop their own opinions about the Catholic faith and develop their own Catholic identity. They did not view it as catechetical, that is to assist growth of their Catholic faith (Arthur, 1995, p. 233). Research (Francis & Rhymer, 1993, p. 471) has shown that Catholic RE does have value in developing positive attitudes to religion, and that it was the Catholic RE lessons rather than the Catholic school per se that caused this positive attitude.

The RE curriculum reflected the teachings and beliefs of the Catholic Church. It did not include an awareness of the diversity of the wider Catholic community. For example it did not include references to Catholic groups supporting the ordination of women priests, or Catholic organisations, which were supportive of divorce or homosexual rights. Similarly, in the Church of England secondary schools there was no mention in the RE curriculum of the movement for ordination of women prior to this being sanctioned by the Church of England (Higgins, 1993). Traditionally RE in the Catholic school reinforced the knowledge and practices students gained from the family and parish (Roebben, 2009, p. 21). However, an increasing number of students within these Catholic schools, learnt about Catholicism in RE, as like many young people throughout Europe, they were religiously illiterate (Davie, 2000, p. 97; Roebben, 2009, p. 22). If curriculum RE is the students' only access to the Catholic faith tradition, it then becomes narrowed down to the beliefs and practices sanctioned by the institutional Catholic Church, as opposed to the more diverse views they may encounter in the family or parish community.

This research has emphasised a view of participants, both staff and students, as active agents (see Chapter 4) rather than passive recipients and this was also the case in the RE classrooms of the three Catholic schools studied. In all the schools visited in this research the heads of RE departments argued that they had some freedom in developing RE in their schools and had adapted the suggestions of the dioceses to the needs of their own students. The year 11 students valued GCSE RE as an opportunity to discuss the doctrines of the Catholic Church and then to develop their own opinions on Church teachings. As, Theissen (1993, p. 30)

explains, nurture into a religious tradition does not mean an absence of ‘critical openness’ and that in fact many religious traditions, including Catholicism (Engelbreton, 2008) encourage such openness. Students appeared to view RE as a dynamic process (see Chapter 8), a chance to reflect on the Catholic faith tradition and then reflect and reassess their own beliefs (Jackson, 2004b, p. 88). The memory of the Catholic faith tradition, as understood by the Catholic Church, was being transmitted in RE lessons and then interpreted by staff and students according to their needs and to their understanding of Catholic identity.

### **11.3.2 A means of transmission - the Catholic staff**

One of the main areas of the Catholic school where Catholicism could be transmitted as a ‘lived faith’, with an awareness of the wider Catholic community, is through the Catholic members of staff in school community. This is an area where the authority of the Catholic Church has been weakening. In these three Catholic schools there was no evidence of the presence of any members of religious orders in the school, an absence common to many Catholic schools in England (Grace, 2002, p. 237). The teaching staff of a Catholic school should be ‘exemplars of Catholic community values and attitudes’ (Morris, 2010, p. 89), and are a ‘particular kind of teacher’ (Gardner & Cairns, 2005, p. 232). The students in my research perceived their teachers to be Catholic and to support Catholic values, but the staff in all three schools were aware of the presence of non-Catholic teachers in school. The Catholic Church is increasingly unable to ensure all of its teachers and leadership teams in school identify as Catholic (see Chapter 8). Those members of staff who do identify as Catholic are also less

likely to be actively practising Catholics. This transforming of Catholic identity can be extended even to head teachers, as many candidates for a headship in Catholic schools are 'relatively inarticulate about the spiritual purposes of Catholic schooling' (Grace, 2002, p. 237). Therefore, for some staff, as well as students, the only encounter with the Catholic faith tradition is in the Catholic school.

The ideal situation for the development of religious capital in Catholic schools would be for the staff and students to be embedded in the Catholic community outside of the school. The religious capital present in the wider Catholic community could then be transferred into school, and the development of that religious capital in school, in the young people, would then reinforce the religious capital in the local parish church. It would be in fact a virtuous circle (Baker & Miles-Watson, 2008). This description matches Arthur's (1995) view of the holistic Catholic school. However, this was not the situation found in the Catholic schools in my research, since the connection between all the staff and students and the wider Catholic community was weak.

#### **11.4 Challenges to generation and control of religious capital**

Alongside the changes in the main means of transmission, curriculum RE and Catholic staff, two further challenges to the development of religious capital in Catholic schools were the changes in attitude to the authority of the Church and the emphasis on academic success as a measure of an effective school. In the last fifty years there has been a lessening of the power and authority of the Catholic

Church (Grace, 2002; Hervieu-Léger, 2000, p. 172). Pace (2007, p. 44) argues that for many the Catholic Church no longer has any authority, and most Catholics would subscribe to the idea that 'I proclaim myself Catholic, but do as I please'. The change in attitudes to the authority of the Church has been made visible in young people's attitudes to Catholic identity (see Chapter 7) and in the challenges parents have made to the Catholic hierarchy's decisions (Grace, 2002, p. 36; Hornsby-Smith, 2000, p. 204).

The Catholic school's emphasis on academic achievement (Morris, 2010, pp. 80-81) could be seen as marginalizing the development of the Catholic faith tradition in the Catholic school. This marginalisation has been exacerbated by changes in government policy with regard to the development of the National Curriculum (Grace, 2001, p. 494). Jewish schools facing similar demands have either extended the school day or reduced the time devoted to Jewish studies and Hebrew (Miller, 2009, p. 199). Arthur (1995, p. 223) argues that the holistic model of Catholic education is no longer found in the majority of Catholic schools, because the Catholic faith tradition is an add-on; whilst the focus is on delivering the secular curriculum and academic achievements. Moreover, Grace (2001, p. 497) notes that Catholic educators need to ensure that the focus on academic success does not result in a loss of the religious mission of the Catholic school.

The students in all three schools emphasised that they valued their school for its academic achievements and all were aware of its academic reputation compared to other local schools. Nonetheless, the head teacher of St Margaret's argued that

academic achievement should not exclude the development of Catholicity in the school, and that academic success was an integral part of the Catholic education. One of the reasons given for the academic success of Catholic schools was the positive involvement of Catholic parents in their child's education (Morris, 2010, p. 81). The next section considers briefly the role of parents in the transmission of the faith tradition in the Catholic school.

### **11.5 Vicarious memory**

In previous research (Bryk, et al., 1993; J. Coleman & Hoffer, 1987) this mutual support system of family, parish and school, has been highlighted as one area that marks out Catholic education as distinctive and as important in developing Catholic identity. In the twenty-first century in England, the transmission of the Catholic faith through family (Grace, 2002, p. 237; Hanvey & Carroll, 2005) and parish is considerably weakened and in many cases not there at all.

The collapse of the traditional family wholly dedicated to biological reproduction and the transmission of a biological, material and symbolic inheritance from generation to generation, probably counts as the central factor in the disintegration of the imagined continuity that lies at the heart of the modern crisis of religion. (Hervieu-Léger, 2000, p. 133)

The fragmentation and high mobility of modern society (see Chapter 2) has had a major effect on the transmission of religious traditions. Although in this research the views of parents were not included, it is relevant to consider their impact on the Catholic school's transmission of the Catholic faith tradition. The parents of children in Catholic secondary schools are noted for their involvement in their



child's education (Morris, 2010) and Morris argues that, as a Catholic school provides education in line with parents' religious views, the pupils will more easily understand and assimilate school values. This would appear to contradict concerns about the lack of faith transmission through the family. Yet, it suggests rather that the parents' involvement focuses on the academic achievement and the values and attitudes transmitted through the Catholic school, rather than the religious beliefs and practices. Other research (P. Collins, 2008; Freund, 2001) has suggested similar conclusions that the parents seek out the Catholic school for reasons other than religious belief. Similar findings have been described in Orthodox Jewish schools, whose aim is to socialise children into the Jewish faith, but where the Jewish parents do not seem to prioritise the Judaic aspects of the education (Valins, 2003). This suggests that education for moral values and academic success is a greater priority for many parents, than the transmission of the faith tradition.

Without a more detailed research of the parents' views in these Catholic schools, I am unable to confirm the reasons why parents chose these Catholic schools for their children. It could however, be that the Catholic school is fulfilling a function of protecting the memory of the faith tradition for the parents of the students. Pace (2007, p. 45) argues that the 'Catholic Church acts as the safeguard of collective memory, even for those who are not great believers'. This idea can be extended to the role of the Catholic school; it is functioning as a safeguard of collective memory of the Catholic faith tradition. The Catholic school is thus fulfilling a vicarious role (Davie, 2000) holding the faith tradition for those who themselves might not practise or believe, but want their child to have access to the moral

values and attitudes associated with that tradition. An interesting area for further research would be to study the impact of the child's Catholic education in a Catholic school on levels of parental faith and practice, along the lines of Pomson and Schnoor's (2009) research in Jewish schools.

## **11.6 Precarious memory**

The memory of the Catholic faith tradition is also becoming increasingly precarious (Davie 2000) in the Catholic school. Without the support of family and parish, the school often appears as the sole transmitter of the Catholic faith tradition. Brother's (1964) had already noted that the grammar school was replacing the parish as the main Catholic community for its pupils in the 1960s. The majority of the participants in this research did not mention the Catholic parish as having influence on their Catholic beliefs or practices, in fact there were negative references to the parish church as being 'boring' or for the elderly. The Catholic schools in this study had a high percentage of baptised Catholics, but that did not guarantee that they or their families were practising (Roebben, 2009, p. 24). Baptism is not a sign of active membership of the Catholic Church, (see Chapter 7) and baptised Catholics who do not belong to a Catholic parish community are less likely to gain from the religious capital generated by the Church. It is also less easy for the Catholic Church to communicate its message to them. The student participants in my research did not mention the sacrament of reconciliation, which Pace (2007) argues previously functioned as a means of reinforcing the message of the Catholic Church. In Europe now few Catholics

attend this sacrament and thus one means of control of members of the Catholic Church has been lost.

For the students in my research study it was only the ‘hardcore’ or religious Catholics who attended weekly Sunday Mass in a parish church (see Chapter 7). Many of the students only encountered a celebration of Mass in school (see Chapter 6). This is markedly different from Brothers’ research (1964), where she found that on the whole ‘if they [the Catholic student] believed they went to church’ (1964, p. 48). Even if one did not believe one went to church, she cites the example of a young man who was an agnostic but still attended church to save ‘hurting his family’, and another who did not believe, but still went to church when he was home. Attendance at Sunday Mass was viewed as the basic element of being Catholic. She describes how two university students explained how they had been very lax about their faith in their first year, but both still had attended a weekly Sunday Mass (Brothers, 1964, p. 52). Brothers (1964) findings suggest that possibly the change is not in levels of belief, but in levels of practice. In the twenty-first century it is more acceptable for a Catholic to not attend church than it was fifty years ago. For the students in my research, Mass celebrations in school were creating for them a link to the memory of the faith tradition, but the link becomes tenuous if this is the only experience of the Catholic faith tradition.

With a lack of reinforcement from family, or from parish, the memory of the Catholic faith tradition is becoming increasingly precarious and Hornsby-Smith (2000) argues that the chain of memory will come close to breaking point without the reinforcing support of Catholic schools (Hornsby-Smith, 2000, p. 205).

Vermeer (2009, p. 207) argues that the denominational school does have the ability to provide a view of religion as a lived religion. The Catholic secondary school is a community in which 'belief in God is the norm' (Francis & Robbins, 2005, p. 122). This is important for the formation of a religious identity, as an identity needs the support and 'the recognition of others' (Vermeer, 2009). However, for many participants in this research, the Catholic school is the only place where 'belief in God is the norm'. The Catholic school is thus attempting to create a Catholic environment not present elsewhere in a student's life. Nevertheless, in the participants' responses it did appear that they were encountering Catholicism within the framework of the Catholic school.

### **11.7 Manufacturing memory**

Given the precariousness of the memory of the faith tradition (Davie, 2000, p. 82) religious institutions are creating memories of the past (see Chapter 2). In this research it was possible to identify areas where memory of the tradition was perhaps being manufactured, for example the Catholic schools' provision of access to retreats, mission activities, and pilgrimage experiences. The Catholic schools offered these experiences as opportunities for the participants to develop spiritually. Moreover, these activities could also be viewed as having the purpose of generating religious capital, and of the socialisation of the young people into the traditions of the Catholic Church (Hervieu-Léger, 2000). The Catholic Church is seeking to re-connect the young people to the Catholic tradition and strengthen the bonds between the school community and the Catholic Church. Hervieu-Léger (2000) argues that there is a cultural mobilisation of memory promoted by clerical

leadership. For example Pope John-Paul the Second was very keen to promote world youth days and pilgrimages to sacred sites, such as Lourdes.

[Pope John-Paul wanted] to invest the yield of the symbolic capital accumulated during these events in a new means of communication for the Church itself. (Pace, 2007, p. 46)

However, from the data in this research the evidence is that for some participants like Louise \* (see Chapter 7), although the Lourdes pilgrimage was perceived as a great experience and she would wish to repeat it, there was no desire to develop any connection to the Catholic Church. To an outsider to the Catholic students' participation in pilgrimages, retreats and missions, these interactions in sacred spaces and places might appear to highlight a connection to the Catholic Church. In this research the young participants were not emphasising that connection, instead they focused on the social side of retreats and pilgrimage. The students were connecting to aspects of the Catholic faith tradition, to fragments of the tradition without perceiving a need to accept a holistic view of the faith.

## **11.8 A failure of transmission?**

The many challenges to the control of the memory of the faith tradition within the Catholic schools has had an impact on the generation of religious capital within the Catholic school, which has implications for the Catholic Church. As Finke (2003, p. 3) points out 'the greater the religious capital, the less likely people are to either re affiliate or convert to a new religion'. The reverse is obviously also true, a weakening of religious capital will result in weaker bonds to the religious institution, in this case the Catholic Church. If religious capital is measured in

attachment to the institution, and Church attendance is a measure of this attachment, then, for some Catholics, the Catholic schools have failed in their transmission of the Catholic faith tradition.

Catholic schools have had no success at all in halting the precipitous downward slide in church attendance. (Pyke, 2005)

This can cause conflict between the Catholic school and the local Catholic Church. A priest of an inner city parish laments the fact that out of a local school population of 180 at the most twelve could be found attending Mass in church (Gallagher, 2001, p. 287). Thus for some Catholics, the Catholic school is no longer fulfilling a role of providing the future generation of active members of the Catholic parish church. Research (Francis & Lankshear, 1993) has shown that Anglican church schools can have a positive affect on the local parish community and Orthodox Jewish day schools are seen to have an essential role in reinforcing the Jewish identity of their students and of contributing to the wider Jewish community (Pomson, 2009). My research showed no evidence that the students perceived the role of the Catholic school as being to contribute to the religious capital of the wider Catholic community. However, the Catholic schools may have a role in maintaining the memory of the Catholic faith tradition.

The students appeared to view the Catholic faith encountered as a resource to be used in everyday life, for example the chapel is a place where students can go and pray for the dead; and the Lourdes pilgrimage is something students undertake simply for 'the buzz'. Participants' perceptions of Catholicism were concerned with feeling and doing, with actions rather than beliefs. It is a view of religion apparent in elsewhere in research on congregations (Ammerman, 2007; Richter,

2004). This view of the Catholic faith tradition suggests that a more appropriate way of viewing the capital developed in school is to consider the concept of spiritual capital rather than religious capital.

## **11.9 Spiritual capital**

Within the Catholic school the perception is that the transmission of the faith tradition is changing, in so much as it is less to do with Church attendance and more with personal spiritual development. For Grace (2002) spiritual capital is ‘resources of faith and values derived from commitment to a religious tradition’. It is a source of empowerment as it provides a ‘transcendent impulse’ (Grace, 2002, p. 236). Head teachers speak of the spiritual capital changing not declining and state that it is no longer residing only in the hierarchy in school, but throughout the whole school (2002, p. 218). Spiritual capital is being used more and more as a concept in studies of spirituality and new age movements, but spiritual capital is a concept still relevant within mainstream religious traditions (Davies & Guest, 2007). Religious capital can be viewed as fixed, created in religious hierarchies, the value fixed by ‘gold standard of tradition’ (Verter, 2003). Spiritual capital is not possessed or defined by the hierarchy of the religious tradition, but acknowledges the ‘believer’ as an agent, not just a passive recipient. It is a more fluid resource, representing a shift:

from the affirmation of and commitment to inherited and relatively immutable religious traditions to the eclectic appropriation of religious resources, chosen and adapted to meet the individual’s subjective needs. (Davies & Guest, 2007, p. 129)

Spiritual capital is a cultural resource to be acquired and exchanged. It is linked to religious tradition, but available for transformation by individuals according to their needs. An exploration of the participants' perception of their Catholic identity highlights this change from fixed religious capital to the more fluid concept of spiritual capital.

### **11.10 Catholic students as 'bricoleurs'**

One way to analyse the Catholic students' reception of the faith tradition, was to examine the variety of ways in which they understood Catholic identity. Traditionally in academic research there have been a limited number of categories to describe students in Catholic schools, for example active, sliding, lapsed and non-Catholic (Francis, 2002), or 'super core', 'core' 'intermediate' and 'former' (Fulton 2000). The students in this study did not fall easily into these categories. Nor did the traditional markers of Catholic identity, such as attendance at Mass and an understanding of Catholic doctrine (Grace 2002), appear to be of relevance to the student participants (see Chapter 7).

The students, who mostly defined themselves as Catholics or baptised Catholics, appeared to emphasise certain aspects of Catholicism to explain their Catholic identity (see Chapter 7). They appeared to hold to a Catholic identity, which contained only fragments of the Catholic faith tradition. For example, a majority of pupils appeared to attach themselves to the ethical dimension of the faith tradition, which for many could be reduced to 'loving your neighbour', or golden rule Christianity (see Chapter 7). The breaking down of Catholicism into these



fragments of tradition, and the students' belief that their understanding of Catholic identity was equally as valid as that of the Catholic Church reflects changing views of Catholic identity.

Hervieu-Léger (2001, p. 69) developed the idea of young people as 'bricoleurs', actively constructing a religious identity that they understand and can claim as their own. Similarly, Hyde (2008) found that Catholic pupils in Australia drew on 'an eclectic range of concepts', weaving their own threads of meaning. In two studies of Catholics in Ireland, Inglis (2007) and Andersen (2010, p. 36) found that Catholics were constructing their religious identity, although they differ on how creative they were being, with Inglis suggesting that Catholics were creative and bringing in elements from outside Catholicism, while Andersen found little evidence of this creativity. I would argue that the young people in this research were constructing an identity mainly from the limited resources present in the Catholic school, with little evidence of drawing in elements from outside. The students' views of Catholic identity correspond to Hervieu-Léger's pilgrim type (2003, p. 280). It is a fluid and changeable identity, not attached to the traditional markers of time (Sunday Mass) and space (the parish church).

The young people involved in this research did not appear to be rejecting the Catholic tradition, but expressed strongly the view that they had a right to choose which aspects they consider necessary. They held a 'right to bricolage' (Hervieu-Léger, 1998, p. 217) and felt unconstrained by the authority of the Church. In fact 'the self [was] the judge of the authenticity of each religious and spiritual phenomenon' (Davies & Guest, 2007, p. 168). However, this right to bricolage

can be identified even in traditional church goers, who may hold beliefs contrary to Christianity, for example belief in reincarnation (Stringer, 2008, p. 38). Religion is often situational and contradictory and ‘ordinary Christians don’t think in terms of systematic belief or systems of theology’ (Stringer, 2008, p. 51). Perhaps, there is not a great distance between the Catholic participants in this research and more traditional Catholic churchgoers.

#### **11.10.1 Transformed retention**

Davies and Guest (2007) argue that, in their research with the families of Anglican Bishops, they could identify a process, which they called ‘transformed retention’:

The critically creative process of adaptive change by which beliefs pass from parents to children, or from mentors to those they influence. (2007, p. 170)

This process highlights the active adaptation of the receivers, but acknowledges a connection between the religious tradition and the receivers. This process of transformed retention appears to be occurring in the students involved in this research. The participants’ sense of religious identity is constructed using various resources provided by the Catholic school, but is not an identity defined by the institutions - in this case the Catholic Church. Nevertheless, the process is not free flowing; it flows from the memories of the Catholic faith tradition transmitted within the Catholic school.

The depth of the roots of the identity within the Catholic faith needs to be explored further. It appears to be a thin rather than thick identity (Schweitzer,

2007). Many of these young people are constructing their Catholic identity only from the resources provided to them by the Catholic school. However, the Catholic school cannot provide the depth of the Catholic faith tradition that can be found in an active Catholic community; the Catholic school cannot be a substitute for the Catholic Church (Engebretson, 2008, p. 159).

### **11.11 The Catholic school as creator of a Catholic identity**

The other side of the students' construction of a Catholic identity is that Catholic schools could appear to be bestowing a Catholic identity on those who would not otherwise claim one. The admissions policy of the Catholic school could be creating a Catholic identity, given the academic success of Catholic secondary schools, the young participants and their families may be claiming a Catholic identity, knowing what a Catholic school wants to hear (Loseke, 2007, p. 672). It could be thus a Catholic identity that is only relevant with the framework of the school system. If the Catholic school includes many who have assumed a Catholic identity for the purpose of being in a Catholic school, this will affect the habitus of the Catholic school. As the Catholic habitus affects the development of the Catholic identity, so the Catholic identity of the members of the school affects the Catholic habitus. It is not a one-way transmission. Identity is formed in part through belonging to a community. The community of the Catholic school plays a role in development of personal religious identity of the students (Bryk, et al., 1993, p. 314), and the fact that a school might promote a particular identity narrative does not mean that all that happens within the school corresponds to that narrative (Wardekker & Miedema, 2001, p. 46). So the Catholic identity, which

is only developed within the framework of the Catholic school, will be changing as membership of the Catholic school changes.

The challenge of much of this discussion on Catholic identity is that this research is limited to perceptions of the participants in the Catholic schools studied. Further research is needed to confirm or challenge these findings. A major criticism of the concept of spiritual capital is that there is a lack of successful measurement, since there are no clear success criteria in the transmission of spiritual capital. The success of the generation of religious capital could be measured in the numbers actively attaching themselves to a religious tradition, linking themselves to the Catholic parishes. However, the success or otherwise of the generation of spiritual capital is not easily measured, and maybe the outcome is only fully apparent in mature adult lives and behaviour (Greeley [1998] cited in Grace, 2002, p. 214).

A conclusion that could be drawn is that there is a changing view of Catholic identity; indeed that there are not one but several Catholic identities. Participants may be committed, but only to one aspect of the Catholic faith tradition. These participants' responses go beyond the traditional categorisations of Catholic identity. Their Catholic identity is an identity in the process of formation and is one, which is subject to changes not only in time, but also in context. Identity 'is not a status, but an activity' (Vermeer, 2009, p. 206). The memory of tradition, which Hervieu-Léger (2000) describes as a chain of memory, appears within these Catholic schools to be more fluid. It appears like the form of a wave within the

sea, which exists only for a moment in time, or like a child's kaleidoscope in which with every turn a new pattern is formed.

### **11.12 Conclusion**

This chapter has suggested that religious capital is weakening within the Catholic school. The resources of faith, the school chapel, and the celebrations of Mass are still present. However, religious capital is being challenged on many fronts: changes in views of authority; increased parental power; increased emphasis on academic achievement as a measure of school success; and the weakening Catholic identity of students and staff. Students viewed curriculum RE as a dynamic process and an opportunity to reflect and develop their beliefs. The Catholic school is still maintaining an attachment to the Catholic faith tradition, but this attachment is increasingly precarious. However, the Catholic school does appear to generate spiritual capital, giving young people a resource of beliefs, values and attitudes from which they can construct their religious identity as they see fit. Many of the students within Catholic schools studied use the resources of the Catholic tradition to construct a religious identity that has its roots in Catholicism, but one which is becoming increasingly distant from its source in the Catholic Church.

## **Chapter 12: The Catholic school: creator of bonds and bridges?**

### **12.1 Introduction**

Chapter 11 addressed research questions 1 and 2 and described three Catholic schools, where perceptions of the memory of the Catholic faith tradition were changing. This chapter addresses the last two research questions, namely: 3) to what extent these Catholic school community formed cohesive communities; and 4) to what extent these Catholic schools contributed to, or detracted from social cohesion. Research (Bryk, et al., 1993; J. Coleman & Hoffer, 1987) has suggested that Catholic schools are a good generator and repository of social capital. Annette (2005, p. 198) argued that these claims were based on the development of bonding capital and queried whether faith schools were as successful in generating bridging capital. In the first section of this chapter, I put forward the proposal that these Catholic schools were successful in generating bonding capital, and they appeared to be effective internally cohesive communities with shared values and norms. In the second section of the chapter I consider the evidence for the development of bridging capital in these Catholic schools. This leads to an examination of two factors that may deter the development of bridging capital in Catholic schools, and potentially hamper the schools contribution to community cohesion, namely the admissions policy and the RE curriculum.

## **12.2 A Cohesive community?**

This section explores the evidence for the generation of bonding capital in the Catholic schools. Bonding capital consists of strong bonds between members of a community and ‘it is valuable in building a sense of shared identity and security’ (Catts & Ozga, 2005). Within the Catholic schools involved in this research four main areas were identified that reflected evidence of, and contributed to, the generation of bonding capital. These are the perception of shared Catholic identity; shared experiences; shared values; and a ‘sense of community’.

### **12.2.1 Perceptions of shared Catholic identity**

Bonding capital occurs more easily amongst groups whose membership is homogeneous and who associate with each other over a period of time (Foster, Meinhard, & Berger, 2003, p. 4). It develops amongst people ‘who are alike’ (see Chapter 3). An important aspect of bonding capital is this perception of the ties of identity that link the members of the community. The ethnographic study highlighted the view that many members of the school community perceived each other to be ‘Catholic’. However, this assumption that the community was linked by a shared Catholic identity was made more complex by the variety of understandings of what it meant to be Catholic. Within the Catholic school community, the term ‘a Catholic’ carried a diversity of meanings (see Chapter 7), in so much as an individual’s self-identification as a Catholic covered a variety of beliefs and practices. However, what is relevant here is the general perception that all belong to one Catholic school community (see Chapter 9) and this is evident in participants’ descriptions of shared experiences and values.

### **12.2.2 Shared experiences**

Perceptions of shared experiences are a visible sign of the presence of bonding capital within a community. The participants' responses focused on the perception that these experiences were open to all members of the school community. Thus even though only a small number of pupils went to Lourdes (see Chapter 6), students viewed this as an opportunity for all members of the school. This was the same for the retreats and the work of the mission teams; there was no perception that these activities were only for the 'religious' or 'hardcore' Catholics or even just for Catholic members of the school. In St Julian's a year 12 Muslim student spoke of attending Mass, and a year 10 Protestant student actively supported the chaplain's work in the school; both viewed themselves as part of the Catholic school community. This research has shown that it is possible to view the opportunities to experience the Catholic faith in the Catholic school as experiences engendering a 'sense of community'.

### **12.2.3 Shared Values**

One of the bonding ties of any community is a perception that members of the community subscribe to the same value system; that there are 'underlying shared values' (Bryk, et al., 1993). Within all the Catholic schools visited participants perceived that what held their school community together was the fact that all members of the school community shared Catholic values. The values that participants highlighted were: respect for all individuals, trust, fair discipline, friendship and care for each other (see Chapter 8). Another shared value apparent in all three schools was the emphasis given to academic achievement. The



participants describe examples of these values in practice in the community, and they were for many participants the most important aspect of the Catholicity of the school. Catholicism was often expressed as ‘golden rule Christianity’ (Ammerman, 1997) and there was a perception that the underlying Catholic principle is no more than ‘being nice to people’ (Rymarz & Graham, 2006, p. 377). Many participants referred to Catholic values or Catholic principles as the only element of the Catholic faith that they would pass on to future generations (see Chapter 7). The values described were not specifically Catholic, but are values common to many cultures and faiths. There is the danger that by perceiving these values as Catholic, there is the unspoken assumption that others do not share your values. This highlights one aspect of the negative side of strong bonding capital, that the school community views itself as tightly bounded and excludes those not inside.

#### **12.2.4 A ‘sense of community’**

A sense of shared values is a generator of bonding capital and links to a strong ‘sense of community’ within Catholic schools. Catholic schools are perceived to be particularly successful in generating a ‘sense of community’ (Bryk, 1996; J. Coleman & Hoffer, 1987; Donlevy & MacCrimmon, 2009; H. Johnson & Castelli, 2000). The participants in this study put great emphasis on the belief that there was a strong ‘sense of community’ within their school, many stressing that it was unique to Catholic schools (see Chapter 9). A characteristic of a good community is its basis in values rather than its mere organizational functionality (Donlevy & MacCrimmon, 2009). A key factor in the development of social capital is trustworthiness of the environment (J. Coleman, 1988) and a sense of

shared values and beliefs (Bryk, 1996). The strength of relationships between people based on levels of trust, reciprocity, norms and sanctions is a sign of horizontal bonding capital (see Chapter 3). The level of 'horizontal' bonding capital within the school community was perceived to be very high, and many participants spoke positively of relationships with their peers, and of staff-pupil relationships. They spoke of a community of trust within their school. The Catholic school was seen by both students and staff to be an environment where there were strong bonds, between all members of the school community. The school was thus a place where individuals felt secure to be themselves and a place that gave them an identity. Thus, these three Catholic schools did appear to be successful generators of bonding capital, even though some of the factors that contributed to this were not unique to Catholic schools.

### **12.3 The secular roots of bonding capital**

The bonding capital generated within these three Catholic secondary schools had its roots in shared values, a shared purpose of academic achievement and a strong 'sense of community'. However, many of these characteristics could be found in non-Catholic schools, (see Chapter 9), who also seek to promote shared values, academic achievement and 'sense of community'. Other non-faith factors that could contribute to the generation of bonding capital in the Catholic secondary schools in this research were the strong regional identity of the schools and the socio-economic determinants. All the schools visited in this research fell within a region of England that possesses a strong dialect and sense of identity. The population of the three Catholic schools were also drawn from a similar socio-

economic range. The perception that all share values and the generation of a high level of trust creates the belief in a cohesive Catholic school community, even though all the factors contributing to the bonding capital are not necessarily exclusively Catholic. Catholic schools do have internal social capital, but Annette (2005, p. 197) argues that it is unclear how the external social capital of the faith community produces this internal social capital. The next section considers whether this bonding capital extends to the Catholic Church and the wider Catholic community.

#### **12.4 The Catholic roots of bonding capital**

The Catholic community was traditionally perceived to be a strong functional community, where family, school and parish were as one community, and previous research (Bryk, et al., 1993; J. Coleman & Hoffer, 1987) has focused on this as the major contributing factor to the development of social capital in the Catholic school. The bonds between school and family still exist although, as I argued in Chapter 11, the shared bonds focused on development of morals, values and academic achievement. The parents support the Catholic school (see Chapter 11), and reinforce the values, the ethos, and discipline of the school, which ensures the generation of strong bonding capital. However, this did not appear to be linked to practices and beliefs of Catholicism, but rather to the values, that is the ethical dimension of the faith tradition.

Chapter 11 described the precariousness of the remaining bonds between the Catholic school and the Catholic Church. However, the participants viewed the

‘sense of community’ as being intricately linked with the Catholicity of the school. The Catholic school was perceived to be a Catholic community in so much as people were accepted as individuals and able to express a Catholic identity. However, this research has not shown that members of these Catholic schools perceived a strong connection with the local parish church or a wider Catholic community, or the Catholic Church. The Catholic school may be the only Catholic institution with which many students and staff have contact (see Chapter 11). This leads to a view of the Catholic school as bonded community, which is separate from the Catholic Church as institution, but drawing on the resources of the ethical dimension of the Catholic faith.

A community that reflects tight bonds and a closure of networks is beneficial because it allows ‘the development of effective norms and reputations’ (J. Coleman, 1988, p. 107). The high level of bonding capital, despite its secular roots and lack of connections with the Catholic Church as an institution, allows the Catholic school to develop a clear Catholic ethos, a sense of Catholicity within the school. The diversity of Catholic identities within the school seemed to be irrelevant, what was important is the perception of a ‘sense of community’, which was reinforced by all members of the school community. So, despite little of evidence of bonding with the wider Catholic community, the students in this research still felt that they were part of a Catholic community, albeit one that was focused on the Catholic school rather than on a wider Catholic community. Therefore I would conclude that these Catholic schools were effective generators of bonding capital, which enabled them to establish the perception of a Catholic community within the school. Although the participants’ responses did not reflect

a view of the strong functional community of family, parish and school apparent in Coleman (1987) and Bryk's (1993) research, these Catholic schools did appear as cohesive communities and successful generators of bonding capital.

The value of closure in developing social capital within a community was emphasised by Coleman (1988), who argued that a strongly bonded community was able to provide more support for its members, than a community that had loose bonds. However, it is sometimes assumed that a strongly bonded community will inevitably be inward looking and will lack the motivation to generate bridging capital (see Chapter 3). Some religious groups do appear to focus on bonding capital at the expense of bridging capital (Baker & Miles-Watson, 2007, p. 16), as it is the former which contributes towards maintaining the religious identity of the community. Nevertheless, a high level of bonding capital does not necessarily mean a lack of ties with those outside the community (Healy, 2005). It is argued that a high level of bonding capital may lead to the development of a high level of bridging capital as found in research with Turkish immigrants in Belgium and the Netherlands (Van Craen, et al., 2008). Thus the presence of strong bonding capital need not be a drawback to the development of bridging capital.

## **12.5 Bridging capital in the Catholic schools studied**

Bridging capital is defined as residing in the networks between communities, which link people to opportunities and structures of support (Catts & Ozga, 2005). It is capital that enables communities to link, and to build relationships across

differences, and is beneficial in the formation of a cohesive society (Gilchrist, 2004). The development of bridging capital is closely linked to the concept of community cohesion. To achieve community cohesion, communities need to develop resources of bridging capital and develop connections between diverse individuals and communities.

[Community cohesion involves] working towards a society in which there is a common vision and sense of belonging by all communities; a society in which the diversity of people's backgrounds and circumstances is appreciated and valued. (Department for Children Schools and Families, 2007b)

The main emphasis then, for the government, is on cohesion across cultures, ethnic, religious and socio-economic groups (Department for Children Schools and Families, 2007b). It is about,

helping micro-communities to gel or mesh into an integrated whole...to develop common goals and a shared vision. (Cantle [2001] cited in Thomas, 2003)

The government view that all faith schools have a duty to promote community cohesion is outlined in the document 'Faith in the System' (Department for Children Schools and Families, 2007a).

The British government's understanding of social cohesion has been criticised for its emphasis on diversity, rather than economic inequality and material deprivation, as the cause of the lack of cohesion (Letki, 2008). It has also been criticised for an unrealistic understanding of society as comprising 'small cohesive well-bonded groups joined to each other by loose ties' (R. Leonard &

Onyx, 2003). Recent government policy documents, such as the report from the Commission on Integration and Community Cohesion (2007), do reflect a change from viewing faith traditions as reified cultures to an understanding of the ‘multi-identities’ of communities and individuals (McGhee 2008).

## **12.6 A Catholic understanding of community cohesion**

The Catholic education service in England and Wales has reacted to the government’s community cohesion initiatives by emphasising that community cohesion is already an integral concept to Catholicism (Catholic Bishops Conference of England and Wales, 2008) and by outlining the Catholic understanding of community cohesion. The Catholic Bishops’ of England and Wales argue that the teachings of the Catholic faith tradition encourage Catholics to respect and tolerate all people and to be good citizens.

[The Catholic school] exists to encourage and enable students to become active citizens contributing to the common good of society.

(Bishop Lang [2003] cited in Russell, 2007, p. 249)

For many Catholics cohesion has a theological basis in the teachings of ‘love your neighbour’ (Luke 10:27) and the understanding of every human being as a creation of God. This involves a respect for difference and an identification of commonality (Nichols, 2007). This commonality is found in that God creates every person and every person should be respected in the light of his or her God-given dignity. Following the teachings developed in the Second Vatican Council there has been recognition of a need to engage with the world.

Such engagement is a catalyst for action for the common good of society in the light of scripture and reflected in Catholic social teaching. (Catholic Education Service, 2008, p. 6)

Bishop Vincent Nichols argues that 'dialogue with other faiths is a consistent theme in the life of the Catholic Church' (Foreword, The Catholic Bishops Conference of England and Wales, 2008). The Catholic Education Service (2008) survey of activities that contribute to community cohesion in Catholic schools, describes a Catholic school community that is cohesive, that:

cares for the elderly, welcomes the migrant, responds to the poor and is also mindful of the environment in which the community is located. (Catholic Education Service, 2008)

Since 2007 community cohesion has been an area that is inspected both by Ofsted and by Catholic diocesan inspection teams. Within diocese A in this research, the Section 48 inspection reports note that several schools have made an outstanding contribution to community cohesion. The reports reflect: a strong connection between the schools and the communities from which the pupils come; describe some excellent links with other local schools, parishes and charities both local and global; and emphasise that RE makes a strong contribution through inclusion of the study of other faiths. Few schools in the diocese have many members of other faiths, but one that does is praised for inviting staff of other faiths to participate in voluntary mass and for involving students from different minority cultural backgrounds, in advent liturgies and to describe how Christmas is celebrated in their culture. The Catholic schools understanding of community cohesion focuses



on cohesion with members of the local community, rather than cohesion with separate micro-communities.

In the Catholic schools involved in this research it was participants' perceptions of the boundaries of their school that influenced their descriptions of bridging capital activities. Discussions about connections with those outside the Catholic school community focused on members of the local non-Catholic schools, or interactions with members of the local community, or the charity work undertaken in school (see Chapter 9). Although at staff and head teacher level there were links with local non-Catholic schools, for example school partnerships, the student participants perceived members of these schools in a negative manner (see Chapter 10). The positive perceptions of links with those outside of the Catholic community focused on invitations extended to the local community to come into school for celebrations or after school activities such as computing classes. The participants made few references to links with members of other faith communities and the experience of most students was limited to knowledge gained in RE lessons (see Chapter 10). For the students the boundary with other faith traditions was not important in defining their school community. The students' views are similar to the REDCo's research findings in the Netherlands, that young people do not view religion as 'a social cutting point' (Bertram-Troost & O'Grady, 2008, p. 350). The ethnographic research method in my research was not successful in generating detailed data concerning the creation of bridging capital with members of other faith communities (see Chapter 10). This would be a fruitful area for future research maybe using a quantitative approach and also with Catholic schools in more multi-cultural areas.

## **12.7 Faith schools and community cohesion**

A major criticism of Catholic schools and faith schools in general is that they do not contribute to community cohesion, but actively encourage divisiveness within society. The issue of this relationship between faith schools and social cohesion is seen as important as traditionally schools are viewed as arenas where civic ideals and national identity are inculcated into the next generation (Flint, 2009, p. 166). In the debate frequently all faith schools are viewed through the same lens, but much of the opposition is aimed at the newly established faith schools whether Muslim or evangelical Christian (Flint, 2009). The opposition has centred on public funding being used for faith schools which are assumed to be nurturing distinct cultural identities, and encouraging fragmentation and disintegration so resulting in communities leading parallel lives (Flint, 2009, p. 167). In response to a Church of England report, which noted that under Ofsted's own criteria faith schools often did better on issues of community cohesion, Rabbi Jonathan Romain has argued that:

while school linking projects and classroom discussions of diversity are commendable, inspectors should also consider the impact on cohesion of discriminatory admissions and biased RE lessons. ("Faith schools and Community Cohesion," 2009 November 27th )

There are two main issues here, namely that faith schools encourage segregation through physical separation of a members of the faith community and, secondly, that the curriculum of the faith school does not address issues of social cohesion (Gallagher [1998] cited in Flint, 2009, p. 167). The next section will address the first of these issues, namely that the admissions policy of the Catholic school

ensures the physical separation of members of the faith community from the rest of society.

## **12.8 The admissions policy**

The admissions policies of faith schools are perceived to create a barrier to the development of bridging capital. The admissions policies of all the Catholic schools visited followed guidelines by the Bishops Conference of England and Wales, with a 15% limit on non-Catholic admissions (see Chapter 10), and ensured that the vast majority of students were ‘baptised Catholics’. The Catholic schools in this research were oversubscribed and so are more able to limit admissions to those of the faith group. Their situation is similar to that of oversubscribed Jewish schools in London, which are able to strictly enforce admissions criteria strictly, while those outside the metropolis are more likely to allow in Progressive Jews and gentiles (Valins, 2003, p. 242). The interpretation of the admissions policy can differ from Catholic school to Catholic school and from parish to parish (see Chapter 10), but all focus on ‘baptised practising Catholic’. The Cardinal Vaughan School in the Westminster diocese has recently had to change its admissions policy after the school governors inserted criteria that required families to show active involvement in their parish Church, as the diocese argued that these went beyond their own requirements for admissions to Catholic schools (Brown, 2009). Some Jews express the view that Jewish schools are overwhelmingly influenced by an Orthodox ethos and defend a particular view of Jewishness (Valins, 2003, p. 246). The admissions policies of Catholic schools do not so visibly defend one particular view of Catholicism and Catholic

identity is more flexible than Jewish identity in so much as the focus on the mother's Jewish parentage presents an unchangeable factor. However, the Catholic admissions policy's subscription to a view of Catholicism tied to the sacrament of Baptism and church attendance does not correspond to the student participants' views of Catholic identity (see Chapter 7).

The popularity of Catholic schools and the perception of their academic success could have an influence on identification as Catholic (see Chapter 7). Parents who perhaps otherwise would see no need to emphasise their Catholic identity, may obtain a Catholic baptism for their children to ensure entry into a Catholic school. Children are then 'given' a Catholic identity:

children are boxed into identities without prior exposure to the possibilities, opportunities and processes of individual reasoning that enable them to choose for themselves. (Costa-Pinto, 2006, p. 1)

However, in this research the students did appear to feel free to then construct this Catholic identity according to their needs (see Chapter 7).

One of the main barriers that the admissions policy raises is that members of the school do not mix with those of other faith traditions or those of no faith. Allen and West (2009) have argued that the admissions policies of Catholic schools also discriminate against students from poorer homes, and against low achievers and those from ethnic minorities. This argument is often cited as a reason for faith schools' divisiveness, although Grace (2009b) contests these findings. For some parents the main reason for choosing a faith school is to ensure that their child is educated with others of the same faith. One reason cited by Jewish parents for

choosing a Jewish school for their child was the opportunity for their child to make 'nice friends', that is to develop a circle of Jewish friends. As a parent states:

We were actually choosing to put barriers round our children, we have deeply held beliefs we were promoting. (Valins, 2003, p. 244)

This lack of friendship ties across the faith divide raises concerns for those wishing to promote social cohesion.

Bruegel's (2006) research on friendship groups in a multi-ethnic primary school reflected evidence of cross cultural ties in classroom friendships, as opposed to close friendships with other members of their ethnic group outside school. However, other research on friendship groups in Northern Ireland suggests that factors other than school, for example family and maturation process, may be more important in the generation of ties (Flint, 2009, p. 170). Some schools have sought to overcome the lack of friendship ties with members of other faiths and ethnic groups with the establishment of school twinning and email contact between schools (Ipgrave, 2001). Bruegel (2006) however, argues twinning has little effect on the development of cross cultural friendship ties.

Although not a main focus of the present research the question as to whether they had non-Catholic friends was met with puzzlement by the young participants. Few knew the religion of their friends and most presumed they were Catholic if they went to the same school as themselves. A year 12 Muslim student said, after one of the focus group interviews, that he thought that this was the first time he had spoken about his faith to his peers; normally he just sought to fit in, even to the

extent of attending Mass although he had permission to withdraw. Within the Catholic schools studied there were very few students who mentioned friendship with members of another faith tradition. For many students religion was a marginal issue, something that was not discussed in friendship groups. Similar views were expressed by many students across Europe in REDCo's qualitative analysis of teenagers views on religious pluralism (Knauth, Jozsa, Bertram-Troost, & Ipgrave, 2008).

For proponents of faith schools the admissions policy is an important barrier or filtering mechanism for the school. The construction of educational boundaries inherent in the development of single faith schools is worthwhile (Valins, 2003, p. 246). Many fear that opening up the barrier that is the admissions policy would result in diluting the mission of Catholic schools (Arthur, 1995; Sullivan, 2001, p. 12). The admissions policy of all three schools in this research did ensure that there were very few members of other faith traditions within these Catholic schools. However, it could be argued that that does not necessarily mean that the Catholic school detracts from social cohesion. Short (2002, p. 564) argues that it is the curriculum not the type of school, which is the critical determinant. Therefore with the right curriculum the faith school could contribute to community cohesion.

## **12.9 The Catholic school curriculum**

Another area of debate concerns the extent to which, the curriculum within faith schools contributes to social cohesion, although there has been little research into

this area (Flint, 2009; Grace, 2002). Some commentators in support of faith schools have argued that they do contribute towards social cohesion, through their teaching of ‘critical reasoning and self reflection’ (Flint, 2009, p. 168).

[Catholic schools] promote an understanding of tolerance and religious diversity and provide a curriculum that is synonymous with the requirements of multi cultural citizenship. (Grace, 2003)

The curriculum in Catholic schools focuses on the idea that integral to the teachings of the Catholic Church is the understanding of a cohesive community. For Catholic schools community cohesion is viewed as a whole school issue; the responses to the CES (2008) survey show the variety of activities throughout the Catholic schools seen by school leaders as contributing to cohesion.

An important factor in cohesion is the provision of opportunities for bridging activities with members of different communities. Although it was not the focus of the students views of the boundaries of their school, it has been recognised that the inclusion of teaching about other faiths in the RE curriculum is valuable for the development of community cohesion (Jackson, 2010) and it is this aspect that the next section will consider.

### **12.10 Catholic RE and other faith traditions**

The focus of the Religious Education curriculum in the Catholic school is the teaching of the Catholic faith tradition (Chapter 1,8, and 11). Within the RE curriculum, in Catholic secondary schools following the Key Stage 3 Icon syllabus, only two weeks per year are devoted to the study of other faiths. In the

Catholic schools involved in this research other faiths were studied in more detail than this, for example St Julian's and St Catherine's now devote more time to a study of Islam (see Chapter 10 for students' perceptions). The Key Stage 4 and 5 curriculum is determined by the choice of examination syllabus, which in the schools studied did not include a study of any other faith traditions. Within the RE curriculum the participants recalled no contact or only very little contact with other faiths, although mention was made by some students of visits to a mosque or a synagogue. The RE department arranged visits but they were not available to all students. For example a number of children would be chosen to visit a synagogue or mosque and they would then describe their experience to the other members of their class. However, many students focused on RE when discussing other faith traditions, but their responses showed little understanding of other faiths, and showed little awareness of diversity within other faith traditions (see Chapter 10).

When other faith traditions were taught, they were often taught from a Catholic viewpoint. A member of staff in St Catherine's spoke of the teaching of Judaism as it links to the story of Jesus. Moreover, a deputy Director of Education of diocese A argued that:

children need to be confident in their own faith and see other world religions through Catholic eyes, Catholic perception of other faiths.

Seeing other faiths from a Catholic perspective leads to an approach which suggests that Christianity and indeed Christianity in its Catholic form, is the true religion (Bailey, 2002, p. 30). However, my research did find that changes were taking place, with Islam now being given an increasing place within RE at both St



Julian's and St Catherine's because of the RE department's views that students needed to know about Islam given its prominence in society and in the media.

The students' lack of encounter with members of other faith traditions is a concern. An approach that encourages dialogue and understanding of the diversity of other faith traditions as lived religions arguably should have great value in contributing to social cohesion. Jackson (2004a, p. 7) argues that intercultural education which takes account of religious diversity and promotes dialogue should foster social cohesion through encouragement of tolerance, understanding and respect of all people. For Catholics inter-faith dialogue should be an integral part of Catholic education. In *Nostra Aetate*, the declaration on the relationship of the Church to non-Christian religions, the Second Vatican Council expressed a positive view of other religions (Engebretson, 2009a, p. 45). According to Engebretson (2008) Catholic schools should follow Thangaraj's (1999) four levels of inter-faith dialogue: shared community life; dialogue of action- working together for justice and peace; theological dialogue; and sharing of religious experience (Engebretson, 2008, p. 158). She argues that the Catholic school should reflect Catholicism in its fullness, including critical openness, challenging modern culture and including dialogue with other faiths. Ipgrave's (2001) work has shown the value of students engaging in dialogue with members of other faith traditions, acknowledging not only the similarities but also the differences. Breen (2009, p. 114) has shown that Catholic schools can contribute to social cohesion if they engage in the responsive approach outlined in his research.

Religious Education in a post-modern society should seek to explore boundaries:

[boundaries] that differentiate as well as connect us in relationship with one another [as it is through] deep engagement with a religious 'other' that participants come to understand and appropriate their own religious tradition more deeply and critically. (Veverka, 2004, p. 39)

These encounters with the other are essential for the development of a cohesive society. RE should be engaged in 'transcultural citizenship' with a positive stance towards diversity and a willingness to engage with the other (Østberg 2003a, p. 105). However, the bridging capital required to achieve this is not easily generated; while trust is a good basis for building bonding capital, to build bridging capital the concepts of reciprocity and mutual benefit are needed as well (Foster, et al., 2003) and maybe these are not present in the Catholic school.

However, Short (2002, p. 562) argues direct experience is not the only way to learn about other religions. In support of his argument, Short quotes Allport's research as showing 'contact per se cannot be relied upon diminish prejudice' and Cook's research in 1978 which shows that in inter-group contact experiences often the positive response does not extend to include all members of the other group, as those encountered are perceived to be exceptions to their group (Short, 2002, p. 568). Similar findings are found in inter-faith work, where it is only a minority who will involve themselves in bridging activities (Furbey, et al., 2006, p. 50) and the capital this minority develop is not always diffused throughout the whole organisation. Short (2002) maintains that attitudes are changed not by contact with the group, but by contact with the prevalent attitude to that group. Thus an absence of bridging capital does not necessarily equal intolerance of the other; it may just mean a lack of opportunities or means (Adler & Kwon, 2002).

Catholic commentators would argue that:

[when Catholic schools are] true to the logic of their own philosophy and mission, Catholic schools far from being sectarian or parochial have a concern for the common good as a high priority in their aims.

(Sullivan, 2001, p. 193)

This argument would suggest that Catholic schools could contribute to community cohesion through a curriculum aimed at developing positive values of respect and tolerance. Limited knowledge, and understanding, does not necessarily result in intolerance (Jackson, 2004b, p. 170) and research has shown that positive attitudes to other faiths can be engendered through the teaching of for example, Christianity (Kay & Smith, 2002). If the faith school curriculum is able to emphasise the values of tolerance and respect it is still able to promote active citizenship and thus make a contribution to social cohesion (Halstead & McLaughlin, 2005; Jackson, 2003a; Short, 2002).

However, Schweitzer (2007) questions whether young people are able to develop a full understanding of tolerance if they have a 'thin' religious identity. His description of what he terms 'individualized religion' (p.90) or a 'thin' religious identity, corresponds to my young participants' views of their religious identity (see Chapter 7). He disputes Lähnemann's (1998) claim that tolerance could be taught through basic teachings in Christianity, for example the story of the Good Samaritan, arguing that if the young people only have a thin Christian identity, then this method will not be successful. Schweitzer (2007) argues that Religious Education needs to enable students to develop a 'thick' religious identity, to fully

understand the differences between religions and thus the full meaning of tolerance. In this way if a faith school can provide young people with a secure basis for their religious identity, and a secure cultural heritage, then tolerance and acceptance of others is possible. In other words a strong 'sense of community' identity is necessary before bridging capital can be developed (Roebben, 2009, p. 18). The security of bonding capital can enable the development of spiritual capital, which can then extend the radii of trust and risk, and encourage movement from the security of bonding capital to the more risky bridging capital (Baker, 2009, p. 181). Thus the Catholic school could be a secure environment, a place where students could develop their own religious identity and from where students could encounter and debate others' beliefs and values.

From my research study it is not possible to draw clear conclusions as to whether these Catholic schools contribute to, or detract from social cohesion. It must be acknowledged that bridging capital is harder to generate than bonding capital (McGhee, 2008); motivation and opportunity itself are not sufficient (Weisinger & Salipante, 2005) as the means to do so also need to be present. There is some evidence to suggest that Catholic Church is not particularly successful in the generation of bridging capital (Bane, 2005; Ineson & Burton, 2005). My research focused on the participants' perceptions, so the absence of descriptions of activities that could contribute towards the development of bridging capital does not necessarily mean that no such activities existed within these schools.

Faith schools in general have been criticised for being places where the preservation of the tradition 'takes precedence over the attempt to base social

cohesion upon values that transcend those traditions' (Pring, 2007, p. 15) (see Chapter 1). Catholic schools have also been criticised for being divisive and not fulfilling Catholic teachings in so much as they ignore the ecumenical imperative (Sullivan, 2001, p. 176). Yet, on the other hand, research (Bryk, et al., 1993) has shown that Catholic schools can contribute to social cohesion. The argument that faith schools encourage tolerance in that they enable students to have confidence in their own beliefs and a clear self identity (Halstead & McLaughlin, 2005, p. 70) does carry some weight, but as Jackson (2003) points out:

it seems remarkable, especially in the wake of the events of 11<sup>th</sup> September 2001, that any young people could leave school having had no formal study of any religions other than their own. (Jackson, 2003b, p. 98)

One way to ensure Catholic schools contribute to community cohesion and develop a strong resource of bridging capital, could be to focus on developing a 'thick' religious identity (Schweitzer, 2007). This is especially pertinent for those students for whom the Catholic school provides their only contact with a Catholic community. I would raise the concern that the absence of encounters with other faith traditions as lived religions, is not beneficial for the development of future bridging capital and I would argue alongside this, that there needs to be the development of dialogical encounter with members of other faith traditions. This dialogical encounter will ensure that the religious identity developed is 'thick' rather than 'thin', as it is only in encounters with others, with the boundaries that one is able to fully understand one's own identity. I would argue this even though, for many young people in this research the boundary between religions

was not of importance (see Chapter 10) and thus there was no perceived need for inter-religious dialogue.

### **12.11 Conclusion**

This ethnographic study of a small sample of Catholic secondary schools highlights school communities, which members of the schools perceived to exhibit a strong ‘sense of community’. This would suggest successful generation of bonding capital, although there is not a clear understanding of this extending to bonds with the Catholic Church or local Catholic community. Having a strong repository of bonding capital does not exclude the generation of bridging capital; indeed some evidence would suggest it is beneficial. Within the Catholic schools studied there did not however, appear to be a similarly high level of bridging capital. The two main factors contributing to this were the barrier of the admissions policy to facilitating links both, between faith communities, and with those of no faith, and the focus of the RE curriculum on transmission of the Catholic faith tradition rather than on developing knowledge and understanding of other faith traditions. Thus, Catholic schools may simultaneously detract from community cohesion on the account of their admissions policy, whilst also contributing towards it by providing a space where religious identities can be developed.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter considers the conclusions that can be drawn from the examination of the research questions in the preceding chapters. It will also set out some implications from this research for: the faith school debate; Catholic Religious Education; Religious Education in community schools and future research. This conclusion addresses the four research questions:

1. In what ways does a Catholic school reflect the Catholic faith tradition in twenty-first century?
2. In what ways does a Catholic school ensure the transmission of the Catholic faith tradition?
3. To what extent does a Catholic school form a cohesive community?
4. To what extent does a Catholic school contribute to, or detract from community cohesion?

The ethnographic research method, in particular the semi-structured interviews generated a rich vein of data from both students and staff in three Catholic secondary schools in England. The next four sections will consider each of these questions in turn, beginning with an examination of the Catholicity of the Catholic school.

### **The Catholicity of the Catholic school**

The participants' descriptions of the Catholicity of their schools were analysed using Hervieu-Léger's (1998) descriptions of the dimensions of religion, in particular the communal, emotional, and ethical dimensions. St Julian's, St Margaret's and St Catherine's were Catholic schools where Catholicism as a faith

tradition was made visible: in the physical environment; in the form of crucifixes on the wall; in the space of the school chapel; and in rituals such as form prayers and celebrations of Mass. These are, in fact, some of the traditional markers of the communal dimension of Catholicism. However, the students identified these as markers of a Catholic school community, and as such they viewed them as resources to be appropriated by all members of the Catholic school community, whether Catholic or not.

In all these Catholic schools, opportunities were created for students to take part in activities, which reflected the emotional dimension of religion, such as retreats, pilgrimages and those organised by the youth mission team. The students' descriptions of the Lourdes pilgrimage gave an insight into the Catholic schools' role in facilitating access to experiences of the Catholic tradition. The students perceived this as open to all members of the community and not exclusively to practising Catholics. The young people no longer access opportunities for pilgrimage or retreats through the Catholic parish. Thus, the Catholic school appears to be creating or manufacturing a memory of the Catholic faith tradition; a necessity as the memory of the tradition becomes increasingly precarious.

The ethical dimension of Catholicism had a very strong presence in these Catholic schools. Many participants described the development and sharing of values, which they identified as Catholic. The values identified, such as respect, trust, friendliness and fair discipline, were seen as an essential part of the Catholicity of their school. Many students emphasised a view of Catholicism as being concerned with 'doing good deeds' rather than believing or practicing. This



reflects Ammerman's (1997) descriptions of the golden rule Christian. I agree with Ammerman that this view of the faith is different in kind, not a lesser version. The majority of the students did not see it as a lesser form of Catholicism.

There was evidence that the Catholic Church and school hierarchy strove to ensure the Catholic school reflected the Catholic faith tradition in its ethos, physical environment and the opportunities to access religious experiences. This research did not provide evidence that experiences of these aspects of Catholicism encouraged the Catholic students to attach or re-attach themselves to the Catholic faith tradition in the form of the institution of the Catholic Church. The students' views of their own Catholic identity reflected a fragmentary view of Catholicity of these Catholic schools.

### **Students' perception of a Catholic identity**

These research findings suggest that the students were taking on an active role in defining their own Catholic identities. An analysis of the participants' responses showed that they did not correspond to the categories defined in previous research studies such as Francis (2002), Fulton (2000) or to the six types of Catholic identity that Hervieu-Léger (1998) had defined. It was here that the value of listening to the voice of the young people became most apparent. The students were not accepting or rejecting the Catholic identity defined by the Catholic Church; they were selecting the elements, which they valued.

One of the most interesting findings of this research was the variety of ways in which the participants defined their Catholic identity. The following categories were selected from the students' understandings of their Catholic identity, understandings that were very varied, fluid and disconnected. I placed their descriptions into eight categories: hardcore Catholic; baptised Catholic; halfway Catholic; Catholic pilgrim; golden rule Catholic; school Catholic; Catholic atheist; and family Catholic. The students' views of their Catholic identity appeared very fragmentary. Some focused on a particular aspects of Catholicism, such as the experience of pilgrimage or more commonly the golden rule Christianity, appropriating selective Catholic values which did not need the support of Catholic beliefs and/or practices. Others self-identification as a 'halfway Catholic' or 'just a baptised Catholic' suggested an awareness of criteria set by the Catholic Church for Catholic identity. Yet others focused on an identity formed by, and within the Catholic school.

The question of how active 'bricoleurs' (Hervieu-Léger, 1998) the young people were is not fully answered by this research. The students appear to be paring down Catholicism until it contained only those elements they required. There was little evidence of them adopting beliefs, values or practices from other religions, which can partly be explained by their apparent lack of depth of knowledge of other faith traditions. The students clearly asserted a 'right to bricolage', that they had a right to construct their Catholic identity and were not constrained by the authority of the Catholic Church or the older generation.

The students viewed Catholicism as a lived experience, rather than as either a system of theology or a spiritual experience. The Catholic faith tradition was not perceived in a holistic manner, but rather as a resource that they could appropriate and use as they wished. The participants viewed religion as a fluid concept. It was here that the concept of spiritual capital as defined by Verter (2003) and Guest (2010) was of value, in interpreting the students approach to the development of their Catholic identity. As explained in this section, the individuals saw the Catholic faith tradition in the Catholic school as a resource to be exploited in constructing their own religious identity. In this way they are appropriating the spiritual capital of the Catholic Church. A concern of the Catholic Church should be that this spiritual capital along with the Catholic identity is being diluted.

The Hervieu-Léger (2000) model of religion as a chain of memory is too robust an image for the religious experience of these Catholic students. A more appropriate image is may be something more fluid rather like waves breaking on a seashore, or the image of a child's kaleidoscope where each turn the fragments make a new pattern.

### **Transmission of the faith tradition**

One of the concerns of the opponents of faith schools is that they threaten a child's autonomy and are indoctrinating young people; that for example the Catholic Church is imposing a Catholic identity on young people. My research, however, highlighted the other side of this issue, illustrating some of the problems of transmission of the faith tradition that the Catholic Church faces within

Catholic schools. These were, for example: a decreasing number of active Catholic teachers and students within the school; and a lack of external support or reinforcement of the transmission of the faith from family or parish. The two main ways that students perceived the transmission to take place was through Religious Education and through the Catholic teaching staff.

The majority of the students perceived curriculum RE to be confessional, and concerned with the teaching of Catholicism. There existed a clear connection between the RE curriculum and the Catholic Church. Yet the students perceived RE as a dynamic process and there was no passive acceptance of the teachings of the Catholic Church. In particular, the older students viewed RE as an opportunity to reflect on the teachings of the Catholic Church and then to develop their opinions and beliefs.

No religious orders were present in any of the three Catholic schools, and little mention was made of the presence of priests in school. There was however a lay chaplain in both St Julian's and St Catherine's. The presence of the lay chaplain reinforced the Catholic identity of the school, but lessened the need for a connection with the parish church. The students perceived the teachers to be Catholic. The teaching staff themselves were aware that many of the staff were not Catholic and that Catholic staff were not necessarily practising Catholics. The habitus of the Catholic school is changing, as Catholic schools attempt to maintain the Catholic faith tradition with an increasing number of non-Catholic members of staff.

For many of the students, the Catholic school was the only Catholic community that they encountered. The majority of the participants lacked the support of a practising Catholic home, or of an active life in a Catholic parish. Their knowledge and experience of the Catholic faith tradition derived solely from the Catholic school. It is unclear how the Catholic school can transmit the diversity of the Catholic faith tradition in the limited time and opportunities available within the Catholic school. This has suggested that for many students the memory of the faith tradition is becoming precarious. The Catholic school is a resource and generator of religious capital, but this capital is not binding the school community or individuals to the Catholic Church as an institution. Engebretson (2008) argues that the Catholic school should reclaim its identity within the Catholic Church, and remember that experience of Catholicism in school is not a substitute for an experience of the Catholic Church.

### **A cohesive community**

One of the most striking findings was the perception of a strong ‘sense of community’ within all the Catholic schools. The participants stressed a sharing of values, which they assumed were derived from the Catholic nature of their school, although a closer analysis found that these were not uniquely Catholic. Nevertheless, many students and staff insisted that the ‘sense of community’ was better in Catholic schools than in other schools, although the majority had no valid means of comparison.

There was perception of the school being a Catholic community or community of Catholics. Yet members of the Catholic school did not comprise a homogeneous Catholic community and there was little evidence of strong connections to the local parish church or the wider Catholic community. Looking through the lens of social capital theory, there was a strong perception of the generation of bonding capital, but bonding capital that was tied to that Catholic school rather than as a resource establishing clear links with the Catholic Church. The Catholic schools in this research appeared to students and staff to be a strongly bonded community, with shared values, norms and sanctions.

### **Community cohesion**

The sense of the boundary of the school and the perception of outsiders was perhaps the most problematic finding of the research from a researcher's viewpoint. For the students the boundary of their school community lay between themselves and members of the local community school. For adults the focus was on those with no faith, either the secular society outside the school or those in school who were not Catholic. The boundary with other faith traditions was not a major issue for the young people in these Catholic schools. Their opinions and understandings of other faiths were often based on knowledge gained in a limited number of RE lessons at Key Stage 3. The very few members of other denominations or faith traditions in these Catholic schools appeared to emphasise their identity as a member of the school community rather than membership of their faith tradition.

Opponents of faith schools have focused on the role of the faith schools' admissions policy in creating divisiveness within society. The students saw the admissions policy as separating themselves from those who attended local community schools. The admissions policy of these Catholic schools reflected the mission of the Catholic Church, in terms of the need for schools to develop Catholic young people within the framework of the Catholic faith. Thus, as oversubscribed schools the majority of students were 'baptised Catholic', so contact in school with members of other faiths was limited. Nevertheless, the inherent divisiveness of a faith school's admissions policy need not detract from community cohesion if the students within that school are equipped to take an active part in a plural society.

It is thus important that the curriculum of a Catholic school develops bridging capital, either through the teaching of values of respect and tolerance or through inter-faith dialogue. Both are essential. The ethnographic fieldwork led to few perceptions of the development of bridging capital in these Catholic schools. The RE curriculum in all three schools focused on the teaching of the Catholic faith tradition, and there was little encounter with other faith traditions. This absence detracts from the Catholic school's contribution to community cohesion.

This small-scale ethnographic research study of three Catholic secondary schools in England has made a valuable and original contribution to research. It has shown the value of the ethnographic approach as used by Nesbitt (2004b) and Jackson (2004b). It has addressed the lack of empirical research: in faith schools, in particular Catholic secondary schools; and on the views of young people in

faith schools. The applications of Hervieu-Leger's theories (1998, 2000) concerning the chain of memory and bricolage have been particularly useful in explaining the students' views of their own Catholic identity. The transmission of the Catholic faith tradition within the Catholic school was clarified when viewed through the concepts of religious and spiritual capital. The concepts of bonding and bridging capital highlighted the cohesive nature of the Catholic school community, but also highlighted an absence of an awareness of the development of bridging capital with other faith traditions. However, this research would have been further improved if the semi-structured group interviews had been followed up with some individual interviews with students and staff. On reflection a wider sample of the school community including support staff, parents, governors and local priests would have given a more in-depth view of the Catholic school community. Nevertheless this small study presents a unique insight into three Catholic secondary schools in England as they face the challenge of transmitting the Catholic faith tradition in a twenty-first century plural society.

### **Implications for the faith school debate**

This research has shown that it is important not only to recognise the differences between schools of different faith traditions, but also to recognise the diversity of religious identity within individual faith schools. Two of the objections to faith schools are the threat to the autonomy of the child and to social cohesion. With regard to the former, this research has shown the importance of not only listening to the voice of the young people, but also to recognise them as active agents in issues of religious identity. As to the issue of social cohesion, it is important that



the barrier of the admissions policy is addressed. It is not an insurmountable barrier if the curriculum of the school addresses the issue of cohesion in terms that can be understood by all members of the school community. If the curriculum enables the development of 'thick' religious identity (Schweitzer, 2007), which could ensure the development of attitudes of tolerance and respect. A point to consider though is that, if the young people do not perceive a boundary between themselves and members of other faith traditions, they do not have the motivation to contribute to social cohesion in this area.

### **Implications for the Catholic secondary school**

This research highlighted the thinning of the Catholicity within these Catholic schools. It is likely that in future the Catholic school will reflect a greater dilution of Catholic practices and beliefs, as there are fewer Catholic staff and students to maintain the Catholicity. It will need to address the fact that for many students the Catholic school will be the only Catholic community that they encounter. This places a burden on the Catholic school to reflect the depth of Catholicism as a lived tradition and to ensure that Catholic Religious Education has space for the diversity and disagreements within the Catholicism.

It is important to listen to the voices of the young Catholic students and not judge them by what they see as out-dated criteria for example weekly mass attendance. In Catholic schools and in research on Catholic schools students are often categorised as practising, non-practising, or lapsed. These divisions carry negative connotations, excluding a number of Catholic students who identify themselves as

Catholic; such simplistic divisions are not reflective of the diversity to be found amongst young Catholics and ignore the active role of the young person in creating their religious identity.

If a sense of religious identity is needed to engender both bonding and bridging capital, it is necessary for Catholic education to provide the young people with the knowledge and the skills to be ‘bricoleurs’, to construct a meaningful religious identity. Religious Education in Catholic schools needs to show awareness of the diversity of beliefs held by the young people and equip students to challenge Catholicism from a faith perspective. It also needs to encourage true dialogue, between both the Catholic students and the Catholic Church and between all students and members of other faith traditions. The Catholic school’s role in aiding the young people to develop their religious identity and facilitating encounters with members of other faith traditions becomes crucial if the Catholic school is the only faith community with which many of these young people will come into contact.

### **Implications for Religious Education in community schools**

The view of religion found amongst the young people in this research moved away from the idea of religion as micro-communities, which need to inter link through the generation of bridging capital. Instead it offers the view of a fragmented Catholic community. Religious education needs to include an awareness of the diversity of identities within a faith tradition, for example that Catholicism includes diverse individuals who subscribe to various different

elements of the whole, and who construct their identity drawing on the resources available to them. This research has shown that the younger generation has a fluid understanding of religious identity and faith traditions. There is a need to listen to the voices of young Catholics and to ensure their understanding of the faith tradition is heard alongside that defined by the leaders of the faith community.

### **Implications for future research**

This research study was firmly placed in an ethnographic framework and the value of in-depth exploration of students' views on their Catholic school is apparent in the insights given into the bonds and boundaries of their school and their own Catholic identity. These areas would, however, benefit from quantitative studies that could confirm or challenge these findings, for example a quantitative study could explore the understanding of identity of a far greater number of students in Catholic schools. It could further explore the eight categories of Catholic identity highlighted by the students in these Catholic schools.

Future research quantitative or qualitative needs to explore an awareness of the diversity of Catholic identity, and confirm or challenge the view that there is not a simple clear-cut division between practising and non- practising. Further research is needed into whether the Catholic students are actively constructing a religious identity or passively assuming one for the time they are in school. There is a need to explore the sense of Catholic identity of those Catholic students not in Catholic schools. There is also the potential to explore the influence non-British Catholic

students have on the identity of the Catholic school. Such an investigation could be extended to include schools of other faith traditions and the effect they have on their students' perceptions of religious identity.

Further research could explore the changing role of the family in the transmission of the faith tradition, and examine the role of the wider family, parents and grandparents. It would be interesting to conduct an investigation into the faith school's role in influencing the religious identity not only of its students, but also of the parents of students.

One clear finding from this research was the strong 'sense of community' described by all these participants; this would be fruitful area for further research. Interviews with members of the wider school community, such as parents, governors, and members of the local Catholic parish, would be able to confirm or challenge my finding that the bonding capital resided within the school rather than within the wider Catholic community. Such a line of research could also explore the views of the Catholic school community from those beyond the boundaries, for example the members of the local community school, and also those who felt excluded by the barrier of the admissions policy. Further research is also necessary to investigate the issue of the development of bridging capital in Catholic schools and to explore further whether a development of Schweitzer's (2007) 'thick' religious identity does engender positive attitudes to cohesion.

This was a small scale study of three Catholic secondary schools in one region of England, to confirm or challenge these findings it would be important to compare

this study with a study: amongst Catholic schools in more multicultural areas; schools from different faith traditions; and non-faith schools.

## **Conclusion**

This ethnographic study of a small sample of Catholic schools provides a snapshot of life in a twenty-first century Catholic school from the viewpoint of students and staff. It has shown that the Catholic religious capital residing in these schools is becoming increasingly precarious. The Catholic school still appears as a resource of spiritual capital, which it is able to maintain and generate through the strong bonding capital developed within the Catholic school. The absence of the development of equivalently strong bridging capital is a cause for concern, to myself as a researcher and RE teacher.

## **Appendix A**

### **Description of Case study schools**

#### **a) Selected case study schools**

##### **St Julian's Catholic High School**

St Julian's Catholic High School was an 11-18 mixed comprehensive in diocese A serving the Catholic population of 10 parishes, with seven feeder primary schools. In 2006 there were approximately 1700 on roll, including around 350 students post-16. The school was significantly oversubscribed each year. The school served a mixed area registering a decline in population. The mix of the population in this area is predominantly White British. I had been involved with the school for over ten years, as a parent of pupils at the school and a foundation governor. For the purposes of research this was of mixed benefit on the positive side, obtaining access was relatively easy, as I was well known to head teacher and deputy head. The negative side to this was the question of objectivity; it was the challenge of making the familiar strange. This school had many positive facts for inclusion in the research, it was a successful academic school; the pupils and staff were accustomed to reflecting on their teaching and learning; most students were able to communicate well both orally and in written work; and it had a senior management team who are supportive of research.

### **St Margaret's Catholic High School**

St Margaret's Catholic High School was a popular, oversubscribed 11- 16 mixed school in diocese B that largely served the communities of two towns on the edge of large metropolitan area. It was a small school with around 600 pupils on roll and an annual intake of four forms. Numbers were on the increase. The intake was drawn in the main from three local Catholic primary schools. Though the percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals was average, they came from a wide range of social backgrounds. Almost all pupils were from White British backgrounds and there were only two pupils who spoke English as an additional language. The newly appointed head teacher explained how the Catholicity of the school, and the sense of Catholic parish that the school still retained had impressed him. He was also supportive of research. This school had positive factors for inclusion in the research.

### **St Catherine's Catholic High School**

St Catherine's Catholic High School was a large 11-18 school situated within diocese A. It had a school population of around 1600 students. The intake was drawn from six local schools. It was an oversubscribed school, with students attaining above average standards. Over half the sixth form intake came from other local schools. The vast majority of students were White British, and the number of students eligible for free school meals was below average. The RE department in the school was very supportive of research.

## **b) The non-selected schools**

### **St Therese's Catholic High School**

St Therese's Catholic High School was a well-established 11 -16 school in diocese B that had a wide catchment area, and served six Catholic parishes. The building was situated in an area of relatively high social deprivation and the school population had been decreasing in recent years. The majority of the local population were White British. The school was a friendly and welcoming school, proud of its roots as a Catholic school founded by an order of nuns, although there were no nuns left on the teaching staff. However, it was facing some staffing challenges, namely the absent of a head teacher, and the use of supply teachers in the RE department. At the time of my visits they were advertising for a new RE teacher, and were considering employing a non- Catholic Christian who supported the Catholic ethos .The admissions of the school was changing, the staff expressed the view that they were taking in more non-Catholics and more challenging pupils as many Catholic parents chose to send their children to one of the two new academies set up locally. It could be argued that a school, which is struggling with, changes in staffing and pupil population will generate interesting data, however it was decided for the purposes of this research a focus on best practice would be more valuable.



### **St Martha's Catholic Sixth Form College**

St Martha's was a sixth form college in diocese B on land adjoining St Therese's although they functioned as completely separate schools. It was a Catholic sixth form college, but its admissions policy was open to all local students. The schools website highlighted that it offered a quality education with many students securing places at good universities, and that the college provided a friendly atmosphere where students were treated as young adults. It was of interest because of the high number of Muslims within it, but it was the only sixth form college in the region. For comparison purposes, it would have had to be compared with an 11-16 or 11-18 school. This would pose problems for the purposes of generalisability, so it was decided not to include it in the research.

### **St Agnes Catholic Primary School**

St Agnes was a voluntary aided primary school with around four hundred pupils from 4-11 feeding into St Julian of Norwich's. The pupils were predominantly White British and the attainment of children when they start school was broadly average. This school was friendly and welcoming, and obtaining access was relatively easy. However, it was the only primary school visited and the structure and ethos of a Catholic primary school differs to that of senior schools. This would have limited effective comparisons between data generated, so it was not included in the main research.

## Appendix B

### List of Interviews- in the three case study schools

| SCHOOL         | NO. OF GROUP INTERVIEWS           | NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS IN EACH GROUP  | TOTAL                          |
|----------------|-----------------------------------|---|--------------------------------|
| St Julian's    | 8 group<br>1 individual           | 1 group of 8 - year 7<br>1 group of 8 - year 9<br>1 group of 8 - year 12<br>1 group of 6 - year 8 and 9<br>1 group of 6 - year 10 and 11<br>1 group of 4 - year 12<br>2 groups of 4 - staff<br>1 individual interview with chaplain | 40 students<br>9 staff         |
| St Margaret's  | 6 groups<br>2 individual          | 1 group of 6 - year 7 students<br>2 groups of 6 - year 8 students<br>3 groups of 6 - year 9 students<br>1 individual interview with head teacher<br>1 individual interview with head of RE (informal non-recorded)                  | 36 students<br>2 staff         |
| St Catherine's | 2 groups                          | 1 group of 6 - year 9<br>1 group of 5 - RE staff  | 6 students<br>5 staff          |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>16 groups<br/>3 individual</b> |   | <b>82 students<br/>7 staff</b> |

**Table 2** List of interviews in selected schools

## Interviews – outside selected case study schools

| Place        | Person                       | Type of Interview |
|--------------|------------------------------|-------------------|
| Diocese A    | Director of Education        | Individual        |
| Diocese A    | Deputy Director of Education | Individual        |
| Diocese B    | Director of Education        | Individual        |
| St Therese's | Acting head teacher          | Individual        |
| St Martha's  | Lay Chaplain                 | Individual        |
| St Agnes     | Head teacher                 | Individual        |

**Table 3** Individual interviews

## Key to Interviews reported in text

|       |                       |
|-------|-----------------------|
| J     | St Julian's           |
| C     | St Catherine's        |
| M     | St Margaret's         |
| Y     | School year           |
| Y7    | Aged 11-12            |
| Y8    | Aged 12-13            |
| Y9    | Aged 13-14            |
| Y10   | Aged 14-15            |
| Y11   | Aged 15-16            |
| Y12   | Aged 16-17            |
| Staff | Teacher               |
| fgi   | Focus group interview |
| Ii    | Individual interview  |

**Table 4** Key to abbreviations

## **Sample Interview schedule - September 2006**

### **Introduction for participants**

This is intended to be an open interview, more like a recorded conversation than a formal interview so please feel free to ask me questions if you do not understand the question. There are no right or wrong answers to any of the questions.

To save me from trying to take notes and ask questions at the same time, do you mind if I record this?

### **Questions**

#### **A: Roman Catholic schools**

Prompts – photographs of school buildings

1. If this was a Catholic school, how would you know? How would you know once you were inside?
2. What makes [X -your school] a Catholic school?
3. If you could take just one picture to show this is a Catholic school what would it be?
4. Is [X –your school] a school for Catholic children or a school that teaches about the Catholic faith?
5. Would it make any difference to this school if 25% of pupils were not Catholic? If the teachers were not Catholic?
6. What does it mean to be a Catholic today?

### **Optional**

Pictures - First communion; girls at prayer; some nuns.

Tell me about these pictures, what can you see?

What do you think this person would be like to know?

### **B: Perceptions of Islam**

7. Have you noticed anything in the papers or television about Muslims recently?
8. Have you heard any one say something good or anything nasty about Muslims?
9. Do you think Muslims and Christians believe in the same God?
10. If you could choose would you be a Catholic or a Muslim? Why?
11. Do you think Catholics show respect for other faiths?
  - a) Give an example of respect
14. How do you think the Catholic Church views Muslims?

### **Optional pictures**

Muslim women, Muslims at prayer

What do you think this person would be like to know?

Tell me about these pictures, do you think people could wear this dress in this school? Why? Why not?

### C: Perception of other religions

12. Faith schools are often accused of keeping their pupils apart from the local community; do you think that is true of this school?
13. If you could take a photo in school to support your point what would it be?
14. How do you see Catholic schools changing in the future?

### Your questions

What questions would you like to ask?

## Appendix C

Responses to the question – How would you know this was a Catholic school?

### Catholic Artefacts- the results of Nvivo search

School A = St Julian's

School B = St Margaret's

School F = St Catherine's

<Documents\Interviews\Interview A school A> - § 2 references coded [0.69% Coverage]

#### Reference 1 - 0.31% Coverage

A crucifix in every classroom

#### Reference 2 - 0.37% Coverage

the school statues as you come in

<Documents\Interviews\Interview Ba school A> - § 3 references coded [2.54% Coverage]

#### Reference 1 - 0.80% Coverage

On the inside would have crucifix or cross on the walls somewhere

#### Reference 2- 0.68% Coverage

Probably like RC on the door, 'cos our school has that ...

#### Reference 3- 1.06% Coverage

Pictures of er saints...pope maybes...

Statue of the saint

Statue of Mary

<Documents\Interviews\interview Da school A> - § 1 reference coded [3.01% Coverage]

#### Reference 1 – 3.01% Coverage

Schools don't look any different like XXX but they just have different signs and stuff

**<Documents\Interviews\interview school A\Interview Ca school A> - § 1**  
**reference coded [1.03% Coverage]**

**Reference 1 - 1.03% Coverage**

yeh there are like the formal things like crucifixes in every classroom ...

**<Documents\Interviews\interview school A\interview Da school A> - § 5**  
**references coded [20.72% Coverage]**

**Reference 1 - 6.03% Coverage**

Both or either

....on the inside normally you would have like a cross or a crucifix, sometimes have like Catholic school thing

a Catholic school sign

...would have RC like Roman Catholic

**Reference 2 – 3.89% Coverage**

...would know it was a Catholic school cos it would usually well sometimes have either saint or Catholic in the name ,,

**Reference 3- 8.07% Coverage**

In our school if you have been round, there are loads of crucifixes in the classrooms and pictures of Jesus stuff like...

And when you walk in like the main reception on the wall big picture with prayer underneath like the school prayer

**Reference 4 – 2.01% Coverage**

No where you can go a picture of Jesus  
Just about everywhere

**Reference 5 - 0.72% Coverage**

Crosses everywhere



<Documents\Interviews\interview school A\Interview y7y8 stm> - § 1  
reference coded [0.65% Coverage]

**Reference 1 - 0.65% Coverage**

Rosary beads

<Documents\Interviews\interview y 9 Pupils school F transcripts> - § 2  
references coded [0.99% Coverage]

**Reference 1 - 0.50% Coverage**

the name of the school X

a crucifix got one in very room

**Reference 2 - 0.49% Coverage**

In primary we could volunteer for mass services ...carry the candle

<Documents\Interviews\Year 7 school B> - § 4 references coded [4.46%  
Coverage]

**Reference 1 - 0.63% Coverage**

we have a chapel and we can go in there at break times

**Reference 2 – 1.51% Coverage**

chapel

our logo

cross

entrance see the cross with the robe and a stone –you have to be as hard as a stone  
and not let anything break ....

**Reference 3 – 1.08% Coverage**

1. picture –the mural of .....St X
2. chapel ...
3. that little thing – where the hosts kept

## Bibliography

- Adler, P. S., & Kwon, S.-W. (2002). Social capital: prospects for a new concept. *Academy of Management Review*, 27, 17-40.
- Agar (1980). *The Professional Stranger*. London: Academic Press.
- Alise, M. A., & Teddlie, C. (2010). A continuation of the paradigm wars? Prevalence rates of methodological approaches across the social/behavioural sciences. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 4(2), 103-126.
- Allen, R., & West, A. (2009). Religious schools in London: school admissions, religious composition and selectivity *Oxford Review of Education*, 35(4), 471 - 494.
- Altena, P., & Herman, C. A. M. (2003). Ritual education in a pluralistic society. *Journal of Education and Religion*, 4(2), 105-127.
- Ammerman, N. T. (1997). Golden rule Christianity: lived religion in the American mainstream. In D. Hall (Ed.), *Lived Religion in America* (pp. 196-216). Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press
- Ammerman, N. T. (2003). Religious identities and religious institutions. In M. Dillon (Ed.), *Handbook of the Sociology of Religion*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ammerman, N. T. (2007). *Everyday Religion: observing modern religious lives*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Ammerman, N. T., & Farnsley, A. E. (1997). *Congregation and Community*. New Brunswick NJ: Rutgers University press.

- Andersen, K. (2010). Irish secularisation and religious identities: evidence of an emerging new Catholic habitus. *Social Compass*, 57(1), 15-39.
- Anderson, L. (2006). Analytic autoethnography. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 35(4), 373-395.
- Angus, L. B. (1988). *Continuity and Change in Catholic Schooling*. Lewes: Falmer Press.
- Annette, J. (2005). Faith schools and communities: communitarianism, social capital and citizenship. In R. Gardner, J. Cairns & D. Lawton (Eds.), *Faith Schools: consensus or conflict*. Abingdon: Routledge Falmer.
- Arneil, B. (2006). *Diverse Communities: the problem with social capital*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Arthur, J. (1995). *The Ebbing Tide: policy and principles of Catholic education*. Leominster: Gracewing.
- Arweck, E., & Nesbitt, E. (2007). Spirituality in education: promoting children's spiritual development through values. *Journal of Contemporary Religion*, 22(3), 311-326.
- Arweck, E., & Nesbitt, E. (2010). Young people's identity formation in mixed-faith families: continuity or discontinuity of religious traditions. *Journal of Contemporary Religion*, 25(1), 67-87.
- Astley, J., Francis, L. J., Wilcox, C., & Burton, L. (2000). How different is Religious Education in Catholic schools. *International Journal of Education and Religion*, 1(2), 267-281.
- Bailey, J. (2002). Religious Education in Church schools. In L. Broadbent & A. Brown (Eds.), *Issues in Religious Education*. London: RoutledgeFalmer.

- Baker, C. (2009). Social, religious and spiritual capitals: a psychological perspective. In M. de Souza, L. J. Francis, O'Higgins-Norman & D. Scott (Eds.), *International Handbook of Education for Spirituality, Care and Wellbeing*. London: Springer.
- Baker, C., & Miles-Watson, J. (2007). *Faith and Traditional Capitals: defining the public scope of religious capital: detailed literature review*. Manchester: William Temple Foundation/Leverhulme Trust Research Programme.
- Baker, C., & Miles-Watson, J. (2008). Exploring secular spiritual capital: an engagement in religious and secular dialogue for a common future? *International Journal of Public Theology*, 2, 442-464.
- Baker, C., & Skinner, H. (2006). *Faith in Action: the dynamic connection between spiritual and religious capital* The William Temple Foundation
- Ball, S. (1984). Beachside reconsidered: reflections on a methodological apprenticeship. In R. G. Burgess (Ed.), *The Research Process in Educational Settings*. London: Falmer Press.
- Bane, M. J. (2005). *The Catholic Puzzle: parishes and civic life*. Boston: John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University.
- Barrett, M. (2000). Development of National Identity in Childhood and Adolescence. 2006(11/05/06). Retrieved from [www.psy.surrey.ac.uk/staff/papers/mb-inaugural.html](http://www.psy.surrey.ac.uk/staff/papers/mb-inaugural.html)
- Bassey, M. (2001). A solution to the problem of generalisation in educational research: fuzzy prediction. *Oxford Review of Education*, 27(1).

- Bassey, M. (2003). On the kinds of research in educational settings. In M. Hammersley (Ed.), *Educational Research and Evidence-based Practice*. Milton Keynes: Open University.
- Bazeley, P. (2007). *Qualitative Data Analysis with NVivo*. London: Sage.
- Beckford, J. A. (2003). *Social Theory and Religion*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bell, J. (2005). *Doing your Research Project*. Berkshire: Open University Press.
- Bellah, R. N., Madsen, R., Sullivan, W. M., Swidler, A., & M., T. S. (2007). *Habits of the Heart: individualism and commitment in American life* (3rd ed.): University Presses of California, Columbia and Princeton.
- Berger, P. L. (2007). Foreword. In N. T. Ammerman (Ed.), *Everyday Religion: observing modern religious lives*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Berger, P. L., & Hefner, R. W. (2003). *Spiritual Capital in Comparative Perspective*. Paper presented at the Spiritual Capital Planning Meeting. Retrieved 14.01.2010, from <http://www.spiritualcapitalresearchprogram.com/pdf/Berger.pdf>
- Berliner, D. C. (2005). The abuses of memory: reflections on the memory boom in anthropology. *Anthropological Quarterly*, 78(1), 197-211
- Bertram-Troost, G., & O' Grady, K. (2008). Religion and education in England and the Netherlands. In T. Knauth, D.-P. Jozsa, Bertram-Troost & J. Ipgrave (Eds.), *Encountering Religious Pluralism in School and Society: a qualitative study of teenage perspectives in Europe*. Munster: Waxmann.
- Bishop M. McMahon (2009). *Selecting leaders for Catholic schools from memorandum on appointment of teachers to Catholic schools*.

- Boggs, C. (2001). Social capital and political fantasy: Robert Putnam's 'Bowling Alone'. *Theory and Society*, 30(2), 281-297.
- Botros, G. (2006). Religious identity as a historical narrative: Coptic Orthodox immigrant churches and the representation of history. *Journal of Historical Sociology*, 19(2), 174-201.
- Bourdieu, P. (1986). The forms of capital (R. Nice, Trans.). In J. E. Richardson (Ed.), *Handbook of Theory of Research for the Sociology of Education*. New York: Greenwood Press.
- Bourdieu, P., Chamboredon, J.-C., Passeron, J.-C., & Krais, B. (1991). *The Craft of Sociology: epistemological preliminaries*. Berlin: De Gruyter.
- Breen, D. (2009). Religious diversity, inter-ethnic relations and the Catholic school: introducing the responsive approach to single faith schooling. *British Journal of Religious Education*, 31(2), 103-115.
- Brewer, M. (2005). Optimal distinctiveness, social identity, and the self. In M. R. Leary & J. Price Tangney (Eds.), *Handbook of Self and Identity*. New York: Guilford.
- British Educational Research Association (2004). *Revised Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research*.
- British Sociological Association (March 2002). Statement of Ethical Practice - March 2002 (appendix updated May 04) Retrieved 10.05.2010, from <http://www.britsoc.co.uk/NR/rdonlyres/801B9A62-5CD3-4BC2-93E1-FF470FF10256/0/StatementofEthicalPractice.pdf>
- Brothers, J. (1964). *Church and School: a study of the impact of education on religion*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.

- Brown, A. (2009). Top school clashes with diocese over admissions. *The Catholic Herald*. Retrieved May 2010, from <http://archive.catholicherald.co.uk/articles/a0000454.shtml>.
- Bruce, S. (2001). Reviewed work: Religion as a chain of memory by Danièle Hervieu-Léger. . *The American Journal of Sociology*, 106(5), 1478-1480
- Bruce, S. (2003). The demise of Christianity in Britain. In G. Davie, P. Heelas & L. Woodhead (Eds.), *Predicting Religion: Christian, secular and alternative futures*. Aldershot: Ashgate.
- Bruegel, I. (2006). *Social Capital, Diversity and Education Policy*: Families and Social Capital ESRC Research Group, London South Bank University
- Bryk, A. S. (1996). Lessons from Catholic High schools on renewing our educational institutions. In T. H. McLaughlin, J. O' Keefe & B. O'Keefe (Eds.), *The Contemporary Catholic School: context, identity, and diversity*. London: Falmer Press.
- Bryk, A. S., Lee, V. E., & Holland, P. B. (1993). *Catholic Schools and the Common Good*. London: Harvard University Press.
- Bryman, A. (2004). *Social Research Methods* (2nd ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Burgess, R. G. (1983). *Experiencing Comprehensive Education : a study of Bishop McGregor School*. London: Methuen.
- Burgess, R. G. (1984a). Autobiographical accounts and research experience. In R. G. Burgess (Ed.), *The Research Process in Educational Settings: ten case studies*. London: Falmer Press.
- Burgess, R. G. (1984b). *In the Field : an introduction to field research*. London: Allen & Unwin.

- Burgess, R. G. (Ed.). (1984c). *The Research Process in Educational Settings: ten case studies*. London: Falmer Press.
- Burt, R. S. (2001). Structural holes versus network closure as social capital. In N. Lin, K. S. Cook & R. S. Burt (Eds.), *Social Capital; theory and research*. New Brunswick: Transaction.
- Carrette, J. R. (2004). Religion and Mestrovic's post emotional society: the manufacturing of religious emotion. *Religion*, 34(4), 271-289.
- Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales (1996). *Religious Education : curriculum directory for Catholic schools*. London: Catholic Education Service.
- Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales (1999). *Evaluating the Distinctive Nature of a Catholic School*.
- Catholic Bishops Conference of England and Wales (1996). *Religious Education : curriculum directory for Catholic schools*. London: Catholic Education Service.
- Catholic Bishops Conference of England and Wales (2000 ). *Statement on Religious Education in Catholic Schools*. Retrieved July 2008. from [www.rcdow.org.uk/education/default.asp?library\\_ref=8&content\\_ref=827](http://www.rcdow.org.uk/education/default.asp?library_ref=8&content_ref=827).
- Catholic Bishops Conference of England and Wales (2008). *Catholic Schools, Children of Other Faith and Community Cohesion: cherishing education for human growth*.
- Catholic Education Service (2005). *Survey on chaplaincy provision for 14-19 year olds in Catholic schools and colleges in England and Wales*



- Catholic Education Service (2008). *Community Cohesion Guidance for Catholic schools*.
- Catholic Education Service (2009). Living and Sharing our Faith - A national project of catechesis and religious education Retrieved February 12th 2010, from <http://www.cesew.org.uk/standard.asp?id=88>
- Catts, R., & Ozga, J. (2005). *What is Social Capital and how might it be used in Scotland's schools?* : CES Centre for Educational Sociology.
- Chaudhry, L. N. (1997). Researching "my people" researching myself: fragments of a reflexive tale. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 10(4), 441-443.
- Cisneros-Puebla, C. A., Faux, R., & Mey, G. (2004). Qualitative researchers-stories told, stories shared: the storied nature of qualitative research. an introduction to the special issue:FQS interviews. *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research [On-line Journal]* 5(3), Art. 37.
- Clifford, J. (1986). Introduction. In J. Clifford & G. E. Marcus (Eds.), *Partial Truths in Writing Culture: the poetics and politics of ethnography*. Berkley: University of California Press.
- Cohen, A. P. (2007). *The Symbolic Construction of Community*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2000). *Research Methods in Education* (5th ed.). London: Routledge Falmer.
- Coleman, J. (1988). Social capital in the creation of human capital. *The American Journal of Sociology*, 94, 95-120.

- Coleman, J. (1994). *Foundations of Social Theory* Boston: Harvard University Press.
- Coleman, J., & Hoffer, T. (1987). *Public and Private High Schools: the impact of communities*. New York: Basic Books.
- Coleman, J. A., SJ. (2003). Religious social capital: its nature, social location and limits. In C. E. Smidt (Ed.), *Religion as Social Capital: producing the common good*. Waco, Texas: Baylor University Press.
- Coll, R. (2007). Student teachers' perceptions of their role and responsibilities as Catholic educators. *European Journal of Teacher Education*, 30(4), 445-465.
- Coll, R. (2009). Catholic school leadership: exploring its impact on the faith development of probationer teachers in Scotland. *International Studies in Catholic Education*, 1(2), 200-213.
- Collins (2001). Connecting anthropology and Quakerism: transcending the Insider/Outsider dichotomy In E. Arweck & M. D. Stringer (Eds.), *Theorising Faith: the insider/outsider problem in the study of ritual* Birmingham: University of Birmingham.
- Collins, P. (2008). *Believers: does Australian Catholicism have a future?* Sydney, N.S.W.: UNSW Press.
- Conteh, J., Gregory, E., Kearney, C., & Mor-Sommerfield, A. (2005). *On Writing Educational Ethnographies: the art of collusion*. Stoke on Trent: Trentham.
- Convey, J. J. (1992). *Catholic Schools make a Difference: twenty-five years of research*. Washington: National Catholic Educational Association.

- Costa-Pinto, S. (2006). Amaryta Sen Identity and Violence: the illusion of destiny *Eras*, 8.
- Court, D. (2006). How shall we study religious school culture. *Religious Education*, 101(2), 233-241.
- Cox, J. L. (2003). *Religion without God: methodological agnosticism and the future of religious studies*. Paper presented at the The Hibbert Lecture from [www.thehibberttrust.org.uk/documents/hibbert\\_lecture\\_2003.doc](http://www.thehibberttrust.org.uk/documents/hibbert_lecture_2003.doc)
- Cram, R. H. (2001). The future of Christian Religious Education in an era of shrinking transcendence *Religious Education*, 96(2).
- Crossman, J. (2003). Secular spiritual development in education from international and global perspectives. *Oxford Review of Education*, 29(4), 503-520.
- Curran, M., & Francis, L. J. (1996). Measuring 'Catholic identity' among pupils in Catholic secondary schools. In L. J. Francis, W. K. Kay & W. S. Campbell (Eds.), *Research in Religious Education*. Leominster: Gracewing.
- Dandelion, P. (2004). *The Creation of Quaker Theory: insider perspectives* Aldershot: Ashgate.
- Davie, G. (1994). *Religion in Britain since 1945 : believing without belonging*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Davie, G. (1999). Religion and modernity: the work of Danièle Hervieu-Léger. In K. Flanagan & P. Jupp (Eds.), *Postmodernity, Sociology and Religion*. Basingstoke: St Martins Press.
- Davie, G. (2000). *Religion in Modern Europe: a memory mutates*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Davie, G. (2007a). *The Sociology of Religion*. Los Angeles ; London: Sage.

- Davie, G. (2007b). Vicarious religion: a methodological challenge. In N. T. Ammerman (Ed.), *Everyday Religion: observing modern religious lives*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Davies, D., & Guest, M. (2007). *Bishops, Wives and Children: spiritual capital across the generations*. Aldershot: Ashgate.
- Denscombe (2007). *The Good Research Guide: for small-scale social research projects* (3rd ed.). Maidenhead: Open University Press.
- Department for Children Schools and Families (2007a). *Faith in the System: the role of schools with a religious character in English education and society*. Retrieved August 2010. from <http://www.governornet.co.uk/linkAttachments/Faith%20in%20the%20System.pdf>.
- Department for Children Schools and Families (2007b). *Guidance on the Duty to Promote Community Cohesion*.
- Department for Children Schools and Families (2010). *Every Child Matters*. Retrieved 18/06/2010. from <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/>.
- Department for Education and Skills (2007). *School Admissions Code*. Retrieved 01.08.2010.
- Dewey, J. (2009). Teaching leadership through town meeting. In A. Pomson & H. Deitcher (Eds.), *Jewish Day Schools, Jewish Communities: a reconsideration*. Oxford: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization.
- Dippo, D. (1992). Ethnographic, near-ethnographic, and not-so-ethnographic accounts of school life: searching for the teachable text. *Review of Education, Pedagogy and Cultural Studies*, 14(2), 95-105.

- Dobbelaere, K. (1981). Trend report: Secularisation: a multi-dimensional concept. *Current Sociology*, 29, 3-153
- Donlevy, J. K. (2006). Non-Catholic students impact upon Catholic students in four Catholic High Schools. *Journal of Religion and Society*, 8, 1-18.
- Donlevy, J. K., & MacCrimmon, A. (2009). The fostering of religious pluralism in public education: a case study *Religious Education*, 104(2), 114 - 132.
- Donmoyer (1990). Generalisability and the single-case study. In Eisner & Peshkin (Eds.), *Qualitative Inquiry in Education: the continuing debate*. New York Teachers College Press.
- Donnelly, C. (1999). *Differences in schools: a question of ethos?* Paper presented at the British Educational Research Association Annual Conference.
- Driscoll, M., E (1995). Thinking like a fish: the implications of the image of school community for connections between parents and schools In P. W. Cookson, Schneider, B. (Ed.), *Transforming Schools*. New York: Routledge.
- Dunlop, S. (2008). *Visualising Hope: exploring the spirituality of young people in Central and Eastern Europe*. Cambridge: YTC Press.
- Egan, J. (1988). *Opting Out: Catholic schools today*. Leominster: Fowler Wright Books Ltd.
- Engebretson, K. (2008). The Catholic school called to dialogue: a reflection on some consequences of the ecclesial unity of the Catholic school. *Journal of Beliefs & Values-Studies in Religion & Education*, 29(2), 151-160.
- Engebretson, K. (2009a). Beyond neutrality: the Catholic university and inter-religious dialogue. *Journal of Adult Theological Education*, 6(1), 42-54.

- Engebretson, K. (2009b). Called to be holy: the transformative potential of Christian service programmes in Catholic schools. *Journal of Beliefs & Values*, 30(2), 193-204.
- Faith schools and Community Cohesion (2009 November 27th November 27th). *Accord* Retrieved January 10th 2010.
- Farr, J. (2004). Social capital: a conceptual history. *Political Theory*, 32(1), 6-33.
- Field, J. (2008). *Social Capital*. London: Routledge.
- Finke, R. (2003). *Spiritual Capital: Definitions, Applications and New Frontiers*. Paper presented at the Spiritual Capital Planning Meeting. from <http://www.spiritualcapitalresearchprogram.com/pdf/Finke.pdf>
- Finke, R., & Dougherty, K. D. (2002). The effects of professional training: the social and religious capital acquired in seminaries. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 41(1), 103-120.
- Flanagan, K. (2001). Danièle Hervieu-Léger, Religion as a chain of memory. *New Blackfriars*, 82(964), 301-304.
- Flint, J. (2007). Faith schools, multiculturalism and community cohesion: Muslim and Roman Catholic state schools in England and Scotland. *Policy and Politics*, 35(2), 251-268.
- Flint, J. (2009). Faith-based schools: institutionalising parallel lives. In A. Dinham, R. Furbey & V. Lowndes (Eds.), *Faith in the Public Realm: controversies, policies and practices*. Bristol: The Policy Press.
- Foster, M., Meinhard, A., & Berger, I. (2003). *The Role of Social Capital: bridging, bonding or both*. Toronto: Centre for Voluntary Sector Studies, Ryerson University.

- Francis, L. J. (1986). Denominational schools and pupil attitude towards Christianity *British Educational Research Journal* 12, 145-152.
- Francis, L. J. (1995). Church schools and pupils attitudes towards Christianity *British Journal of Religious Education* 17, 133-139.
- Francis, L. J. (2002). Catholic schools and Catholic values? A study of moral and religious values among 13-15 year old pupils attending non-denominational and Catholic schools in England and Wales. *International Journal of Education and Religion*, 3(1), 69-84.
- Francis, L. J., & Astley, J. (Eds.). (2002). *Children, Churches and Christian Learning*. London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.
- Francis, L. J., & Egan, J. (1993). The Catholic school as 'faith community': an empirical enquiry. In L. J. Francis & D. W. Lankshear (Eds.), *Christian Perspectives on Church Schools*. Leominster: Gracewing.
- Francis, L. J., & Lankshear, D. W. (1993). The impact of church schools on village church life. In L. J. Francis & D. W. Lankshear (Eds.), *Christian Perspectives on Church Schools*. Leominster: Gracewing.
- Francis, L. J., & Rhymer, J. (1993). Roman Catholic secondary schools in Scotland and pupil attitude towards religion. In L. J. Francis & D. W. Lankshear (Eds.), *Christian Perspectives on Church Schools*. Leominster: Gracewing.
- Francis, L. J., & Robbins, M. (2005). *Urban Hope and Spiritual Health: the adolescent voice*. Peterborough: Epworth.
- Freund, M. (2001). 'They hear all about it around the traps': Catholic ethos and school choice. *Australian Association for Research in Education* from [www.aare.edu.au/01pap/fre01667.htm](http://www.aare.edu.au/01pap/fre01667.htm)

- Fukuyama, F. (1999). *Social capital and civil society*. from [www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/seminar/1999/reforms/fukuyama.htm](http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/seminar/1999/reforms/fukuyama.htm)
- Fulton, J. D. (2000). *Young Catholics at the New Millennium : the religion and morality of young adults in western countries*. Dublin: University College Dublin Press.
- Furbey, R., Dinham, A., Farnell, R., Finneron, D., Wilkinson, G., Howarth, C., et al. (2006). *Faith as Social Capital: connecting or dividing* Bristol: Joseph Rowntree Foundation.
- Furman, G. (2002). Introduction In G. Furman (Ed.), *School as Community: from promise to practice*. Albany, NY: State University of New York.
- Gallagher, J. (1996). The Catholic school and Religious Education: meeting a variety of needs. In T. H. McLaughlin, J. O' Keefe & B. O'Keefe (Eds.), *The Contemporary Catholic School: context, identity and diversity*. London: Falmer Press.
- Gallagher, J. (2001). *Soil for the Seed: historical, pastoral and theological reflections on educating to and in the faith* Great Wakering: McCrimmon.
- Gardner, R., & Cairns, J. (2005). Continuing personal and professional development and faith schools. In R. Gardner, J. Cairns & D. Lawton (Eds.), *Faith Schools: consensus or conflict*. Abingdon: RoutledgeFalmer.
- Geertz, C. (1973). Deep play: notes on the Balinese cockfight. In C. Geertz (Ed.), *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic books.
- Geertz, C. (1999). From the natives point of view. In R. T. McCutcheon (Ed.), *The Insider/outsider Problem in the Study of Religion*. London Cassell.



- Gent, B. (2005). Intercultural learning: education and Islam- a case study. In R. Jackson & U. McKenna (Eds.), *Intercultural Education and Religious Plurality*: Oslo Coalition Occasional Papers.
- Genzuk, M. (2003). A Synthesis of Ethnographic Research. *Occasional Papers Series*, (22/01/06). Retrieved from [www-rcf.usc.edu/~genzuk/Ethnographic\\_Research.pdf](http://www-rcf.usc.edu/~genzuk/Ethnographic_Research.pdf)
- Gibson, H. M., & Francis, L. J. (1989). Measuring attitudes towards Christianity among 11-16-year-old pupils in Catholic schools in Scotland. *Educational Research*, 31(1), 65-69.
- Gilchrist, A. (2004). *The Well-connected Community: A networking approach to community development*. Bristol: The Policy Press.
- Gillespie, M. (1992). TV talk in a London Punjabi culture Unpublished PhD thesis Brunel University.
- Gobbo (2004). Ethnographic research as a RE/source of intercultural education, from [www.inst.at/trans/15Nr/08\\_1/gobbo15.htm](http://www.inst.at/trans/15Nr/08_1/gobbo15.htm)
- Gordon, T., Holland, J., Lahelma, E., & Tolonen, T. (2005). Gazing with intent: ethnographic practice in classrooms. *Qualitative Research*, 5(1), 113-131.
- Grace, G. (1996). Leadership in Catholic schools. In T. H. McLaughlin, J. O'Keefe & B. O'Keefe (Eds.), *The Contemporary Catholic School: context, identity and diversity*. London: Falmer Press.
- Grace, G. (2001). The state and Catholic schooling in England and Wales: politics, ideology and mission integrity. *Oxford Review of Education*, 27(4), 489-500.
- Grace, G. (2002). *Catholic Schools: mission, markets and morality*. London ; New York: Routledge/Falmer.

- Grace, G. (2003). Educational studies and faith-based schooling: moving from prejudice to evidence-based argument. *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 51(2).
- Grace, G. (2009a). On the international study of Catholic education: why we need more systematic scholarship and research. *International Studies in Catholic Education*, 1(1), 6-14.
- Grace, G. (2009b). Reflections on Allen and West's paper: 'Religious schools in London: school admissions, religious composition and selectivity'. *Oxford Review of Education*, 35(4), 495 - 503.
- Greeley, A. (1997). Coleman revisited: religious structures as a source of social capital. *The American Behavioural Scientist*, 40(5).
- Greeley, A. (1998). The future of the Catholic school: an American perspective. In J. M. Feheneey, FPM (Ed.), *From Ideal to Action: the inner nature of a Catholic school today*. Dublin: Veritas Publications.
- Greer, J. E. (1993). Viewing 'the other side' in Northern Ireland. In L. J. Francis & D. W. Lankshear (Eds.), *Christian Perspectives on Church Schools*. Leominster: Fowler Wright Books.
- Groome, T. H. (1996). What makes a school Catholic? In T. H. McLaughlin, J. O'Keefe, S.J. & B. O'Keefe (Eds.), *The Contemporary Catholic School: context, identity and diversity*. London: Falmer Press.
- Guest, M. (2010). In search of spiritual capital: the spiritual as a cultural resource. In K. Flanagan & P. J. Jupp (Eds.), *A Sociology of Spirituality* (paperback ed.). Aldershot: Ashgate
- Guest, M., Tusting, K., & Woodhead, L. (2004). *Congregational Studies in the UK: Christianity in a post-Christian context*. Aldershot: Ashgate.

- Haldane, J. (1996). Catholic education and Catholic identity. In T. H. McLaughlin, J. S. J. O'Keefe & B. O'Keefe (Eds.), *The Contemporary Catholic School: context, identity and diversity*. London: The Falmer Press.
- Halpern, D. (2005). *Social Capital*. Cambridge: Polity press.
- Halstead, J. M., & McLaughlin, T. H. (2005). Are faith schools divisive. In R. Gardner, J. Cairns & D. Lawton (Eds.), *Faith Schools: consensus or conflict*. London: RoutledgeFalmer.
- Hammersley, M. (1984). The researcher exposed: a natural history. In R. G. Burgess (Ed.), *The Research Process in Educational Settings: ten case studies*. London: Falmer Press.
- Hammersley, M. (1992). *What is Wrong with Ethnography?: methodological explorations*. London: Routledge.
- Hammersley, M. (2001). On Michael Bassey's concept of fuzzy generalisation. *Oxford Review of Education*, 27(2), 219-225.
- Hanvey, J., SJ. , & Carroll, A., SJ. (2005). *On the Way to Life*. London: Catholic Education Service.
- Hargreaves, D. H. (2003). Teaching as a research-based profession: possibilities and prospects. In M. Hammersley (Ed.), *Educational Research and Evidence-based Practice*. Milton Keynes: Open University.
- Harper, D. (1994). Small N's and community case studies. In C. C. Ragin & H. S. Becker (Eds.), *What is a Case: exploring the foundations of social inquiry*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Hastings, P. (1996). The openness and intellectual challenge in Catholic schools. In T. H. McLaughlin, J. O'Keefe & B. O' Keefe (Eds.), *The Contemporary Catholic School: context, identity and diversity*. London: Falmer Press.
- Haw, K. (1998). *Educating Muslim girls*. Buckingham Open University Press.
- Hawkes, N. (2009). Values and quality teaching at West Kidlington primary school. In T. Lovat & R. Toomey (Eds.), *Values Education and Quality Teaching: the double helix effect*. New York: Springer
- Healy, T. (2005). *In Each Other's Shadow: What has been the impact of human and social capital on life satisfaction in Ireland?* , University College Dublin Dublin.
- Heilman, S. C. (1973). *Synagogue Life: a study of symbolic interaction*. London: University of Chicago.
- Hella, E. (2006). How do Finnish upper secondary students relate to Lutherans. In K. Tirri (Ed.), *Religion, Spirituality and Identity*. Bern: Peter Lang.
- Hermans, C. A. M., Bergen, T., Klaassen, C., Slegers, P., Theunissen, M., & Van Veen, K. (1999). A sense of belonging of teachers of Catholic schools for secondary education: a research into the relation between personal and collective identity. *Journal of Empirical Theology*, 12(2), 35-53.
- Hervieu-Léger, D. (1998). The transmission and formation of socio-religious identities in modernity: an analytical essay on the trajectories of identification. *International Sociology*, 13(2), 213.
- Hervieu-Léger, D. (2000). *Religion as a Chain of Memory*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press.
- Hervieu-Léger, D. (2001). *Le Pèlerin et le Converti: la religion en mouvement*. Paris: Flammarion.

- Hervieu-Léger, D. (2003). *Catholicisme, le Fin d'un Monde*. Paris: Bayard.
- Hervieu-Léger, D. (2006). The role of religion in establishing Social Cohesion. *Eurozine*. Retrieved from <http://www.eurozine.com/articles/2006-08-17-hervieuleger-en.html>
- Hickman, M. J. (1995). *Religion, Class and Identity : the state, the Catholic Church and the education of the Irish in Britain*. Aldershot: Avebury.
- Higgins, J. (1993). Gender and Church of England diocesan syllabuses of religion. In L. J. Francis & D. W. Lankshear (Eds.), *Christian Perspectives on Church Schools*. Leominster: Gracewing.
- Hirschauer, S. (2006). Putting things into words. Ethnographic description and the silence of the social. *Human Studies*, 29, 413-441.
- Hitchcock, G., & Hughes, D. (1995). *Research and the Teacher: a qualitative introduction to school-based research* (2nd ed.). London: Routledge.
- Hoge, D. R. (2001). *Young Adult Catholics : religion in the culture of choice*. Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press.
- Hoge, D. R. (2002). Core and periphery in American Catholic identity. *Journal of Contemporary Religion*, 17(3), 293-302.
- Hogg, M. A. (1996). Intragroup processes, group structure and social identity. In P. Robinson (Ed.), *Social Groups and Identities: developing the legacy of Henri Tajfel*: Routledge Falmer
- Hollenbach, D., S.J. (1996). The Common Good, pluralism and Catholic education. In T. H. McLaughlin, J. S. J. O' Keefe & B. O' Keefe (Eds.), *The Contemporary Catholic school: context, identity and diversity*. London: Falmer Press.

- Hollenbach, D., S.J. (2005). Commentary on Gaudium et Spes (Pastoral constitution on the Church in the modern world). In K. R. Himes, Sowle Lisa Cahill (Ed.), *Modern Catholic Teaching*. Washington: Georgetown University Press.
- Hornsby-Smith, M. P. (1987). *Roman Catholics in England : studies in social structure since the Second World War*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hornsby-Smith, M. P. (2000). The changing social and religious context of Catholic schooling in England and Wales. In M. Eaton, Longmore, Jane., Naylor, Arthur. (Ed.), *Commitment to Diversity: Catholics and education in a changing world*. London: Cassell.
- Hornsby-Smith, M. P. (2004). The changing identity of Catholics in England. In S. Coleman & P. J. Collins (Eds.), *Religion, Identity and Change: perspectives on global transformations*. Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing.
- Hull, J. (2004). Practical theology and religious education in a pluralist Europe. *British Journal of Religious Education*, 26(1).
- Hyde, B. (2008). Weaving the threads of meaning: a characteristic of children's spirituality and its implications for religious education. *British Journal of Religious Education*, 30(3), 235-245.
- Hymes, D. H. (1996). *Ethnography, Linguistics, Narrative Inequality: toward an understanding of voice*. London: Taylor and Francis.
- Ineson, K., & Burton, L. (2005). Social capital generated by two rural churches: the role of individual believers. *Rural Theology: International, Ecumenical and Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, 3(65), 85-98.

- Inglis, T. (2007). Catholic identity in contemporary Ireland: belief and belonging to tradition. *Journal of Contemporary Religion*, 22(2), 205-220.
- Ipgrave, J. (2001). *Pupil to Pupil Dialogue in the Classroom as a Tool for Religious Education*. Warwick: Warwick Religious and Education Research Unit
- Jackson, R. (1997). *Religious Education: an interpretive approach*. London: Hodder and Stoughton.
- Jackson, R. (1999). The Warwick RE project: an interpretive approach to Religious Education. *Religious Education* ?, 94(2), 201-216.
- Jackson, R. (2003a). Should the state fund faith based schools? A review of the arguments *British Journal of Religious Education*, 25(2), 89 - 102
- Jackson, R. (2004a). Intercultural education and recent European pedagogies of religious education. *Intercultural Education*, 15(1), 3-14.
- Jackson, R. (2004b). *Rethinking Religious Education and Plurality: issues in diversity and pedagogy*. London ; New York: RoutledgeFalmer.
- Jackson, R. (2008a). Contextual Religious Education and the interpretive approach. *British Journal of Religious Education*, 30(1), 13-24.
- Jackson, R. (2008b). Towards Religious Education for peace. In R. Jackson, Fujiwara, S. (Ed.), *Peace Education and Religious Plurality: international perspectives*. London: Routledge.
- Jackson, R. (2010). Materials used to teach about world religions in schools in England: a summary. *Religion and Education*, 37(2), 179-182.
- Jackson, R. (Ed.). (2003b). *International Perspectives on Citizenship, Education and Religious Diversity*. London: Routledge Falmer.

- Jackson, R., & Nesbitt, E. (1993). *Hindu Children in Britain*. Stoke on Trent: Trentham.
- Jackson, R., & O' Grady, K. (2007). Religions and education in England: social plurality, civil religion and religious education pedagogy. In R. Jackson, S. Miedema, W. Wolfram & J.-P. Willaime (Eds.), *Religion and Education in Europe: developments, contexts and debates*. Munster: Waxmann.
- Jaffee, M. (1999). Fessing up in a theory: on professing and confessing in the religious studies classroom. In R. T. McCutcheon (Ed.), *The Insider/Outsider Problem in the Study of Religion*. London: Cassell.
- Jenkins, R. (2002). *Pierre Bourdieu revised edition* Abingdon: Routledge.
- Johnson, H. (2006). Using reflective practice to explore the origins and consequences of cultural and faith perspectives. In H. Johnson (Ed.), *Reflecting on Faith Schools*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Johnson, H., & Castelli, M. (2000). Catholic Head Teachers: the importance of culture building in approaches to spiritual and moral development and the transmission of faith tradition *International Journal of Children's Spirituality* 5(1), 75-90.
- Johnson, R. B., & Onwuegbuzie, A. J. (2004). Mixed methods research: a research paradigm whose time has come. *Educational Researcher*, 33(7), 14-26.
- Kay, W. K., & Smith, D. L. (2002). Classroom factors and attitude towards six world religions. *British Journal of Religious Education*, 24(2), 111-122.
- Knauth, T., Jozsa, D.-P., Bertram-Troost, G., & Ipgrave, J. (2008). *Encountering Religious Pluralism in School and Society*. Munster: Waxmann.



- Knott, K. (2005). Insider/outsider perspectives. In J. R. Hinnell (Ed.), *The Routledge Companion to the Study of Religion*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Kvale, S. (1996). *Interviews: an introduction to qualitative research interviewing*. London: Sage.
- Lawton, D., & Cairns, J. (2005). Faith schools: some political issues and an agenda for research. In R. Gardner, J. Cairns & D. Lawton (Eds.), *Faith Schools: consensus or conflict*. Abingdon: RoutledgeFalmer.
- Leonard, M. (2004). Bonding and bridging social capital: reflections from Belfast. *Sociology*, 38(5).
- Leonard, M. (2005). Children, childhood and social capital: exploring the links. *Sociology*, 39(4), 605-622.
- Leonard, M. (2006). Teenagers telling sectarian stories. *Sociology*, 40(6), 1117-1128.
- Leonard, R., & Onyx, J. (2003). Networking through loose and strong ties: an Australian qualitative study. *Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, 14(2), 189-203.
- Leprince, C., & Monin, C. (2002, Mai). Danièle Hervieu-Léger : " De plus en plus de Français affirment croire, mais sans savoir en quoi " *TEO: un nouveau monde: le Ciel*. Retrieved August 2009, from <http://www.esj-lille.fr/atelier/magan2/teo/paysage.html>.
- Letki, N. (2008). Does Diversity erode Social Cohesion? Social Capital and Race in British Neighbourhoods Retrieved 17/01/10, from [http://www.nuff.ox.ac.uk/Politics/papers/2005/NLetki\\_social%20capital%20and%20diversity\\_final.pdf](http://www.nuff.ox.ac.uk/Politics/papers/2005/NLetki_social%20capital%20and%20diversity_final.pdf)>

- Levin, L. (2005). Through the looking glass: religion, identity, and citizenship in a plural culture: from the viewpoint of the modern Orthodox Jewish school. In R. Gardner, J. Cairns & D. Lawton (Eds.), *Faith Schools: consensus or conflict*. Abingdon: RoutledgeFalmer.
- Levitt, M. (1996). *Nice When They are Young: contemporary Christianity in families and schools*. Avebury: Ashgate.
- Lewis, A. (1992). Group child interviews as a research tool. *British Educational Research Journal*, 18(4).
- Lewis, A., & Lindsay (2002). *Researching Children's Perspectives*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Local Government Association (2002). *Guidance on Community Cohesion*.
- Loseke, D. R. (2007). Theory: identity, social bonds and prediction. The study of identity as cultural, institutional, organisational and personal narratives: theoretical and empirical integrations *Sociological Quarterly* 48(4), 661-688.
- Marple, R. (2005). Against faith schools: a philosophical argument for children's right. *International Journal of Children's Spirituality*, 10(2), 133-147.
- McCann, J. F. C. (1998). The crucifix in the classroom: distinctive symbol of a Catholic school. In J. M. Feheney, FPM (Ed.), *From Ideal to Action*. Dublin: Veritas.
- McClelland, V. A. (1996). Wholeness, faith and the distinctiveness of the Catholic school. In T. H. McLaughlin, J. S. O'Keefe & B. O'Keefe (Eds.), *The Contemporary Catholic School: context, identity and diversity*. London: Falmer Press.

- McCutcheon, R. T. (1999). *The Insider/ Outsider Problem in the Study of Religion*. London: Cassell.
- McGhee, D. (2008). 'A past built in difference, a future which is shared': a critical examination of the recommendations made by the Commission on Integration and Community Cohesion. *People, Place & Policy Online*, 2(2), 48-64.
- McGonigal, J., Doherty, R., Allan, J., Mills, S., Catts, R., Redford, M., et al. (2007). Social capital, social inclusion and changing school contexts: a Scottish perspective. *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 55(1), 77-94.
- McGrail, P. (2004). Display and division: congregational conflict among Roman Catholics. In M. Guest, Tusting, Karin., Woodhead, Linda. (Ed.), *Congregational Studies in the UK: Christianity in a post-Christian context*. Aldershot: Ashgate.
- McGrail, P. (2007). *First Communion: Ritual, Church and Popular Religious Identity*. Aldershot: Ashgate.
- McKinney, S. J. (2006). The Faith-based schools debate: challenging assumptions and stereotypes. *Journal of Moral Education*, 35(1).
- McLaughlin, T. H. (1996). The distinctiveness of Catholic education. In T. H. McLaughlin, J. O'Keefe & B. O'Keefe (Eds.), *The Contemporary Catholic School: context, identity and diversity*. London: The Falmer Press.
- McLaughlin, T. H. (2005). The educative importance of ethos. *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 53(3), 306-325.
- McLaughlin, T. H., O'Keefe, J. S. J., & O'Keefe, B. (1996). Setting the scene: current realities and historical perspectives. In T. H. McLaughlin, J. S. J.

- O'Keefe & B. O'Keefe (Eds.), *The Contemporary Catholic School: context, identity and diversity*. London: The Falmer Press.
- Merriam, S. (1988). *Case Study Research in Education: a qualitative approach*. London: Jossey-Bass.
- Meštrović, S. (1997). *Postemotional Society*. London: Sage.
- Miller, H. (2009). Beyond the community: Jewish Day school education in Britain. In A. Pomson & H. Deitcher (Eds.), *Jewish Day Schools, Jewish Communities: a reconsideration*. Oxford: Littman Library of Jewish Civilisation.
- Milner, D. (1996). Children and racism: beyond the value of the dolls. In P. Robinson (Ed.), *Social Groups and Identities: developing the legacy of Henri Tajfel*. Oxford: Butterworth- Heinemann.
- Misztal, B. A. (2004). The sacralization of memory. *European Journal of Social Theory*, 7(67).
- Morris, A. (1997). Same mission, same methods, same results? Academic and religious outcomes from different models of Catholic schooling. *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 45(4), 378-391.
- Morris, A. (1998). By their fruits you will know them: distinctive features of Catholic education. *Research Papers in Education*, 13(1), 87-112.
- Morris, A. (2005). Diversity, deprivation and the common good: pupil attainment in Catholic schools in England. *Oxford Review of Education*, 31(2), 311-330.
- Morris, A. (2010). Parents, pupils and their Catholic schools: evidence from school inspections in England 2000-2005. *International Studies in Catholic Education*, 2(1), 80-94.

- Morrow, V. (1999). Conceptualising social capital in relation to the well-being of children and young people: a critical review. *Sociological Review*, 47(4), 744-765.
- Murray, V. (1996). Other faiths in Catholic schools: general implications of a case study. In T. H. McLaughlin, B. O'Keefe & J. O' Keefe (Eds.), *The Contemporary Catholic School: context, identity and diversity*. London: The Falmer Press.
- National Children's Bureau (NCB) (2004). *Guidelines for Research*. Retrieved 22/01/06. from <http://www.ncb.org.uk>. .
- Nesbitt, E. (1991). 'My Dad's Hindu, my Mum's side are Sikh's: issues in religious identity. *Arts, Culture, Education research paper*. Retrieved from <http://archiv.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/savifadok/volltexte/2009/234/pdf/identity.pdf>
- Nesbitt, E. (1998a). Bridging the gap between young people's experience of their religious traditions at home and school: the contribution of ethnographic research *British Journal of Religious Education*, 20(2), 102.
- Nesbitt, E. (1998b). British, Asian and Hindu: identity, self-narration and the ethnographic interview. *Journal of Beliefs & Values*, 19(2), 189-200.
- Nesbitt, E. (2002). Researching 8 to 13-year-olds' perspectives on their experience of religion. In A. Lewis & G. Lindsay (Eds.), *Researching Children's Perspectives*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Nesbitt, E. (2004a). 'I'm a Gujarati Lohana and Vaishnav as Well': religious identity formation among young Coventrian Punjabis and Gujaratis. In S. Coleman, Collins, Peter. Jeffrey. (Ed.), *Religion, Identity and Change: perspectives on global transformations*. Aldershot: Ashgate.

- Nesbitt, E. (2004b). *Intercultural Education: ethnographic and religious approaches*. Brighton: Sussex Academic Press.
- Nesbitt, E. (2009). Research report: studying the religious socialisation of Sikh and 'mixed-faith' youth in Britain: contexts and issues. *Journal of Religion in Europe*, 2(1), 37-57.
- Nichols, V., (Bishop). (2007). *Community Cohesion and the Catholic school*. Paper presented at the Catholic Education Service.
- Niemi, H. (2006). Identity formation and Religious Education: meeting the challenge for a meaningful life. In K. Tirri (Ed.), *Religion, Spirituality and Identity*. Bern: Peter Lang.
- Nora, P. (1989). Between memory and history: les lieux des memoires. *Representations*, 0(26), 7-24.
- Nye, M. (1992). A place for our gods: the construction of a Hindu temple. Unpublished PhD thesis. University of Edinburgh.
- O' Reilly, K. (2005). *Ethnographic Methods*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- O'Donoghue Patrick Bishop of Lancaster (May 2006). *Draft diocesan guidance on chaplaincy in Catholic secondary schools May 2006*. .
- O'Keefe, J. S. J., & O'Keefe, B. (1996). Directions for research in Catholic Education in the USA and the UK. In T. H. McLaughlin, J. S. J. O' Keefe & B. O' Keefe (Eds.), *The Contemporary Catholic School: context, identity and diversity*. London: The Falmer Press.
- Oliver, P. (2003). *The Student's Guide to Research Ethics*. . Maidenhead: Open University Press.
- Østberg , S. (2003a). Cultural diversity and common citizenship: reflections on ethnicity, religion, nationhood and citizenship among Pakistani young

- people in Europe. In R. Jackson (Ed.), *International Perspectives on Citizenship, Education and Religious Diversity*. London: Routledge Falmer.
- Østberg , S. (2003b). *Pakistani Children in Norway: Islamic nurture in a secular context*. Leeds: Community Religions Project University of Leeds.
- Osterman, K. (2000). Students' need for belonging in the school community. *Review of Educational Research*, 70(3), 323 - 367.
- Pace, E. (2007). Religion as communication: the changing shape of Catholicism in Europe. In N. T. Ammerman (Ed.), *Everyday Religion: observing modern religious lives*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Parker-Jenkins, M. (2005). The legal framework for faith-based schools and the rights of the child. In R. Gardner, J. Cairns & D. Lawton (Eds.), *Faith Schools: consensus or conflict*. Abingdon: RoutledgeFalmer.
- Parker-Jenkins, M., Hartas, D., & Irving, B. A. (Eds.). (2005). *In Good Faith: schools, religion and public funding*. Aldershot: Ashgate.
- Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods* (3rd ed.). London: Sage.
- Performance and Innovation Unit (2002). *Social Capital, a Draft Discussion Paper*.
- Piper, H., Garratt, D. (2004). Identity and citizenship: some of the contradictions in practice. *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 52(3), 276-292.
- Pomson, A. (2009). Jewish schools, Jewish communities: a reconsideration. In A. Pomson & H. Deitcher (Eds.), *Jewish Day Schools, Jewish Communities: a reconsideration*. Oxford: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization.

- Pomson, A., & Schnoor, R. F. (2009). Home-made Jewish culture at the intersection of family life and school. In A. Pomson & H. Deitcher (Eds.), *Jewish Day Schools, Jewish Communities: a reconsideration*. Oxford: Littman library of Jewish Civilisation.
- Portes, A. (1998). Social Capital: its origins and applications in modern society. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 24, 1-24.
- Pratt, N. (2003). On Martyn Hammersley's critique of Bassey's concept of fuzzy generalisation. *Oxford Review of Education*, 29(1), 27-32.
- Pretty, G., Bishop B., Fisher. A., Sonn, C. (2007). Psychological sense of community and its relevance to well-being and everyday life in Australia. *The Australian Community Psychologist* 19(2).
- Pring, R. (2000). Editorial conclusion: a philosophical perspective. *Oxford Review of Education*, 26(3), 495-501.
- Pring, R. (2007). The Common School. *Journal of Philosophy of Education*.
- Punch, K. (2005). *Introduction to Social Research: quantitative and qualitative approaches* (2nd ed.). London: Sage.
- Punch, S. (2002). Research with children: the same or different from research with adults? *Childhood*, 9.
- Putnam, R. (1995). Bowling alone: America's declining social capital. *Journal of Democracy*, 6(1), 65-78.
- Putnam, R. (2000). *Bowling Alone: the collapse and revival of American community*. New York: Simon and Schuster
- Putnam, R. (2004). *Education, diversity, social cohesion and "social capital"*. Paper presented at the Meeting of OECD Education ministers: raising the quality of learning for all, Dublin.



- Putnam, R., Feldstein, L. M., & Cohen, D. (2003). *Better Together: restoring the American community*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Pyke, N. (2005, 01/10/2005). Catholicism for the next generation. *The Tablet*.
- Ragin, C. C., & Becker, H. S. (1994). *What is a Case: exploring the foundations of social inquiry*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Reader, I. (2007). Pilgrimage growth in the modern world: meanings and implications. *Religion*, 37(3), 210-229.
- Richter, P. (2004). Denominational cultures: the Cinderella of congregational studies? In M. Guest, K. Tusting & L. Woodhead (Eds.), *Congregational Studies in the UK: Christianity in a post-Christian context*. Aldershot: Ashgate
- Riley, Marks, & Grace, G. (2003). Big change question: in a period of global uncertainty do faith-based schools reinforce social divisions within societies and between nations. *Journal of Educational Change*, 4.
- Robson, C. (2002). *Real World Research* (2nd ed.). Oxford: Blackwell.
- Roebben, B. (2009). Narithical religious learning: redefining religious education in terms of pilgrimage. *British Journal of Religious Education*, 31(1), 17-27.
- Russell, L. (2007). Keeping the Faith. *Forum*, 49(3), 249
- Rymarz, M. R. (2007). Who goes to World Youth Day? Some data on under-18 Australian participants. *Journal of Beliefs & Values*, 28(1), 33-43.
- Rymarz, M. R., & Graham, J. (2005). Going to Church: attitudes to Church attendance amongst Australian Core Catholic Youth. *Journal of Beliefs & Values-Studies in Religion & Education*, 26(1), 55-64.

- Rymarz, M. R., & Graham, J. (2006). Drifting from the mainstream: the religious identity of Australian core Catholic youth. *International Journal of Children's Spirituality*, 11(3), 317-383.
- Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education (1988). *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic school*.
- Scholefield, L. (2001). The spiritual, moral, social and cultural values of students in a Jewish and Catholic secondary school. *International Journal of Children's Spirituality*, 6(1).
- Schuller, T., Baron, S., & Field, J. (2000). Social capital: a review and critique. In S. Baron, J. Field & T. Schuller (Eds.), *Social Capital: critical perspectives*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Schweitzer, F. (2007). Religious individualization: new challenges to education for tolerance. *British Journal of Religious Education*, 29(1), 89-100.
- Scott, D. (2005). Critical realism and empirical research methods. *Education Journal of Philosophy of Education?*, 39(4), 633-646.
- Scott, D., & Morrison, M. (2006). *Key Ideas in Educational Research*. London: Continuum.
- Seale, C. (2004). *Researching Society and Culture* (2nd ed.). London: Sage.
- Short, G. (1994). Teaching the Holocaust: the relevance of children's perceptions of Jewish culture and identity. *British Educational Research Journal*, 20(4), 393-405.
- Short, G. (2002). Faith-Based schools : a threat to social cohesion. *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 36(4), 559-572.
- Short, G., & Lenga, R.-A. (2002). Jewish primary schools in a multicultural society: responding to diversity. *Journal of Beliefs & Values*, 23(1), 43-54.

- Silverman, D. (2005). *Doing Qualitative Research* (2nd ed.). London: Sage
- Skeie, G. (2002). The concept of plurality and its meaning for Religious Education. *British Journal of Religious Education*, 25(1), 47-59.
- Smart, N. (1971). *The Religious Experience of Mankind*. London: Fontana.
- Smidt, C. E. (2003). *Religion as Social Capital: producing the common good*. Waco, Texas: Baylor University Press.
- Smith, G. (2004). Faith in community and communities of faith? government rhetoric and religious identity in Urban Britain. *Journal of Contemporary Religion*, 19(2), 185 - 204.
- Smith, G. (2005). *Children's Perspectives on Believing and Belonging*. London: National Children's Bureau for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation.
- Smith, J., & Hodgkinson, P. (2002). Review: fussing about the nature of educational research: the neo realists versus the relativists. *British Educational Research Journal* 28(2), 291-296.
- Stake, R. E. (1995). *The Art of Case Study*. London: Sage.
- Stark, R., & Finke, R. (2000). *Acts of Faith: explaining the human side of religion*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Stevens, P., Lupton, R., Mujtaba, T., & Feinstein, L. (2007). *The Development and Impact of Young People's Social Capital in Secondary Schools*.
- Stock, M. (2005). *Christ at the Centre: a summary of why the Church provides Catholic schools*. Birmingham: The Diocesan Schools Commission of Birmingham,,.
- Stringer, M. D. (1999). *On the Perception of Worship*. Birmingham: University of Birmingham press.

- Stringer, M. D. (2008). *Contemporary Western Ethnography and the Definition of Religion*. London: Continuum.
- Sullivan, J. (2001). *Catholic Education: distinctive and inclusive*. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic
- Synod of Catholic Bishops (2005). *Instrumentum Laboris : The Eucharist: source and summit of the life and mission of the Church*
- Taylor, M. (2000). Communities in the lead: power, organisational capacity and social capital. *Urban Studies*, 37(5-6), 1019-1035.
- The Catholic Bishops Conference of England and Wales (1996). *Religious education : curriculum directory for Catholic schools*. London: Catholic Education Service.
- Theissen, E. J. (1993). Two concepts or two phases of liberal education. In L. J. Francis & D. W. Lankshear (Eds.), *Christian Perspectives on Church Schools*. Leominster: Gracewing.
- Thomas, P. (2003). Young people, community cohesion and the role of youth work in building social capital. *Youth and Policy* 81, 21-43.
- Tobler (2003). Learning the difference: Religious Education, citizenship and gendered subjectivity. In R. Jackson (Ed.), *International Perspectives on Citizenship, Education and Religious Diversity*. London: RoutledgeFalmer.
- Unruh, H. R., & Sider, R. J. (2005). *Saving Souls, Serving Society : understanding the faith factor in church-based social ministry*. New York ; Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Valins (2003). Defending identities or segregating communities? Faith-based schooling and the UK Jewish community *Geoforum*, 34(2), 235-247.

- Van Craen, M., Vancluysen, K., & Ackaert, J. (2008). Social capital of Turkish and Moroccan immigrants in Belgium. *1st International Congress of European Turks in the Context of Education and Culture 22-23/02 2008*, Retrieved February 2010, from <http://biblioteca.universia.net/irARecurso.do?page=1st+International+Congress+of+European+Turks+in+the+Context+of+Education+and+Culture+22-23%2F02+2008%2C+Antwerp%2C+Belgium.&id=33801140>>
- Verba, S., Schlozman, K. L., & Brady, H. (1995). *Voice and Equality: civic voluntarism in America politics*. Boston: Harvard University Press.
- Vermeer, P. (2009). Denominational schools and the (religious) socialisation of youths: a changing relationship. *British Journal of Religious Education*, 31(3), 201-211.
- Vermeer, P. (2010). Religious Education and socialisation. *Religious Education*, 105(1), 103-116.
- Verter, B. (2003). Spiritual capital: theorising religion with Bourdieu against Bourdieu. *Sociological Theory*, 21(2), 150-174.
- Veverka, F. B. (2004). Practicing faith: negotiating identity and difference in a religiously pluralistic world. *Religious Education*, 99(1), 38-54.
- Wardekker, W. L., & Miedema, S. (2001). Denominational school identity and the formation of personal identity. *Religious Education*, 96(1), 36-48.
- Weisinger, J. Y., & Salipante, P. F. (2005). A grounded theory for building ethnically bridging social capital in voluntary organisations. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 34(29).
- Williams, A. S., & Davidson, J. D. (1996). Catholic conceptions of faith: a generational analysis. *Sociology of Religion*, 57(3), 273-289.

- Wilson, B. (2003). Prediction and prophecy in the future of religion. In G. Davie, L. Woodhead & P. Heelas (Eds.), *Predicting Religion: Christian, secular and alternative futures*. Aldershot: Ashgate.
- Wolf, M. (1999). Writing ethnography : the poetics and politics of culture. In R. T. McCutcheon (Ed.), *The Insider/Outsider Problem in the Study of Religion*. London: Cassell.
- Woodberry, R. (2003). Researching spiritual capital Retrieved 03.03.2010, from [www.metanexus.net/spiritual\\_capital/pdf/Woodberry.pdf](http://www.metanexus.net/spiritual_capital/pdf/Woodberry.pdf)
- Woodhead, L., Guest, M., & Tusting, K. (2004). Congregational studies: taking stock. In M. Guest, K. Tusting & L. Woodhead (Eds.), *Congregational Studies in the UK: Christianity in a post-Christian context*. Aldershot: Ashgate
- Woolcock, M., & Narayan, D. (2000). Social capital: implications for development theory, research and practice. *The World Bank Research Observer*, 15(2), 225-249.
- Yin, R. K. (2003). *Case Study Research: design and methods* (3rd ed.). London: Sage.